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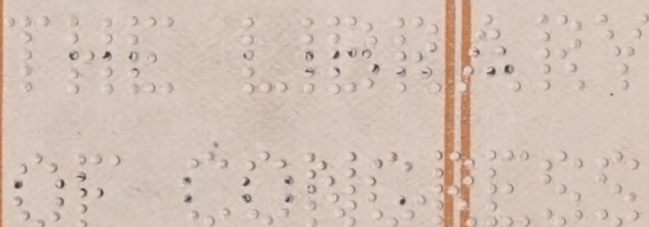
"AID IS VERY WELCOME," GENERAL WASHINGTON SAID

A COLONIAL MAID

OF OLD VIRGINIA

BY LUCY
FOSTER
MADISON

Author of
"A Maid at King Alfred's
Court" etc.

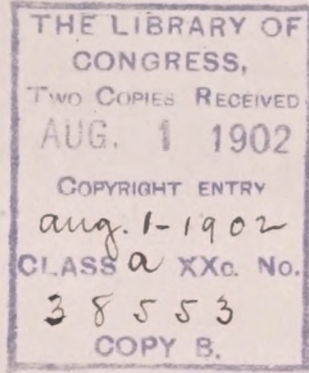


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A Colonial Maid of Old Virginia

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A Colonial Maid

CHAPTER I

• AN INTERRUPTED LESSON

It was the morning of a beautiful summer day in August, 1776.

The sun shone brightly in an unclouded sky. A fine breeze from the river bearing upon its wings the odors of the sea stirred the leaves of the forest and set them dancing and quivering in the sunshine. As if in sympathy with the merriment of the leaves the birds sang gaily, flitting from tree to tree across the mild blue. Hundreds of the feathered songsters filled the oaks that surrounded Forrest Hall; wrens, mocking birds, robins, redbirds and thrushes, every little throat swelling with triumphant song, and making the air vocal with melody.

Forrest Hall was a fine old mansion. One of many whose walls are still standing in

Virginia. It was a broad, rambling structure built of brick brought from England, the foundations of which were laid in the early part of the century. Wings had been added to the original building, and these with the high dormer windows in the roof, and the wide mouthed chimneys made a very picturesque appearance.

As were all the colonial mansions on the James River it was double fronted. Wide spreading porticoes whose stately Corinthian columns were entwined with English ivy gave entrance to the hall both back and front. The main door looked out upon an elbow of the river. The lawn enclosed by a superb box-tree hedge sloped gently down to the water front in terraces. A carriage drive led up to what would be called the rear. At the left of this entrance stood a monarch tulip-poplar a century old.

Had not the trees broken the view, from the vantage ground of the portico there might have been seen the negro quarters with their thronging occupants; the great stables with room for a hundred horses; the ken-

nels filled with the best blooded foxhounds; and farther off the family burying-ground. Beyond these stretched fertile meadows, rich fields of tobacco, and the primeval forest rolling back for miles inland; and in the far distance Richmond town. All presented a beautiful panorama of hill and valley, field and forest, bounded by the noble river.

Forrest Hall and its broad acres were the property of Colonel Ralph Pendleton whose ancestor, Sir William Pendleton, had come over in the time of Charles II. The family had always been noted for its loyalty, and in the troublesome times of '76 Colonel Ralph Pendleton, true to his family, was unswervingly steadfast in his adherence to the King.

Entering the large hall of the mansion one beheld along the high wainscoted walls portraits in oaken frames. Old gentlemen with powdered heads, and fair dames in carefully arranged drapery looked serenely down upon the beholder, and seemed to extend a stately and impressive welcome. Swords, guns and antlers completed the adornment of

the hall. At the back of the apartment the twisted balustrade of the stairs ran up to numerous chambers above, while on either side of the wide space were doors leading respectively to the drawing-room, library, and dining-room of the mansion.

On this beautiful August morning the only occupant of the great hall was a lad of about fifteen years who reclined upon a low couch. His form was tall for his years ; his jet black hair was unpowdered and tied in a queue behind ; from under a noble brow his black eyes glowed full of the enthusiasm of youth. His hands were clasped high above his head and almost hidden by the lace ruffles which reached down from the sleeves of his coat. His stockings were of scarlet silk and his feet, daintily encased in high heeled shoes rosetted with ribbon, were crossed one over the other. The boy was Master Ralph Pendleton, second son of Colonel Ralph Pendleton, owner of Forrest Hall.

Although the lad's attitude was one of ease, he seemed in reality to be waiting for some one as from time to time he turned his head expectantly toward the stairway. Presently

from the upper hall floated the sweet childish tones of a voice singing.

“London Bridge is falling down,
Falling down, falling down ;
London Bridge is falling down,
Right merrily.”

Nearer came the voice, and soon its owner appeared at the head of the stairway. The singer proved to be a girl of some fourteen years. She was clad in the usual child's costume of the period. Her dress consisted of a sort of half frock, half coat, with an embroidered undervest, reaching to the knees ; blue silk stockings and little rosetted slippers with high heels. Her chestnut hair, like the boy's, was unpowdered, and hung in curls upon her neck and bare shoulders. Her brow was low and smooth ; her complexion exquisite in its fairness ; her eyes of dark blue were of unusual brightness. Her expression was one of sweetness, yet gazing longer upon the fresh young face one noted the spirited curve of the lip and the flash of the eye which denoted that the girl, child though she was, had a spirit of her own.

The boy sprang up as soon as he saw the girl, and went toward her quickly.

"How long you were, Virgie," he cried. "I have waited a half hour for you."

"I could not help it, Ralph," she replied. "I was anxious to come, but Evelyn wanted me to finish her lace set."

"Evelyn demands too much of you," cried Ralph indignantly. "Why did she not get Martha to help her?"

"But Martha cannot make lace so well as I."

"True; I had forgot that you were become of note with your stitches. I heard Mrs. Page tell mother that she had never seen such work as your last sampler."

"I hate samplers," flashed the girl. "I only do them because I must. Would I were a boy. There is so much that I would do."

"You do indifferently well now for a girl," laughed Ralph with the calm superiority of fifteen years of masculinity. "And you were a boy, you would be called a boy of parts. But come, let us go to the grove, and you shall give me a lesson."

Virginia drew back.

"I fear there will not be time, Ralph.



HE DREW A FIFE FROM UNDER HIS CLOAK

You know we go to Captain Page's to spend the day."

"Yes; but we do not start until half-past ten. 'Tis only half-past nine now. See! I have the fife."

He drew a long black fife from under the folds of his embroidered coat as he spoke. Virginia's eyes sparkled at the sight of it.

"Ralph, Ralph, for a gentleman's son you place undue regard upon that pipe," she laughed. "What would your father say?"

"That as he excels in the playing of the violin his son is at liberty to choose his own instrument," returned Ralph loftily. "I am too old to consult any but my own wishes on the subject. Come, Virgie," he added coaxingly; "let's go to the grove where none will hear us, and practice."

Without waiting for further persuasion, and indeed she was more than willing, Virginia followed him out of the hall, across the velvety turf of the lawn and down through the trees until they came to a cluster of magnificent oaks commonly called the grove. With great gallantry Ralph spread his handkerchief upon the sward for the girl to

sit upon, and again brought forth the fife.

“I’ve practiced hard, Virgie, and can play some of the tunes real well, but I don’t seem to get them as you do.”

“You didn’t have Uncle Ben to teach you,” said Virginia.

“No; I wish I had. How did you ever come to learn?”

“Why, when I would go down to Mammy Began’s (contracted from Big Ann) cabin, Uncle Ben used to play for me. Once I said ‘I wish I could play,’ and he said he’d teach me; and he did.”

“I wish the old fellow hadn’t died,” said Ralph regretfully. “If only I had thought of it he could have taught me before I went to England. Now he’s dead and I don’t believe there’s another negro on the place who plays anything but the fiddle or the banjo.”

“Never mind; I’ll teach you all that I know, Ralph,” comforted Virginia. “Now let me hear you play.”

She assumed a listening attitude, and Ralph willingly began to play. The lively air of “The Campbells are coming” soon

floated blithely forth. The songsters in the trees ceased their caroling as if questioning what this new music was.

“There!” cried Virginia as Ralph, executing an elaborate variation, finished the tune in grand style. “You need not say anything more about my playing. I am sure that you played that as well as I could.”

“Think so?” queried Ralph trying to conceal his delight. “Then teach me a new tune, Virgie. You know you said you had one.”

“’Tis one Joe Daniel taught me,” said Virginia, “but I did not bring my fife, Ralph.”

“I will get it,” cried Ralph, darting away. He was gone but a short time when he returned with the instrument.

A sparkle of mischief came into Virginia’s eyes, as she placed the fife to her lips and began the inspiriting strains of Yankee Doodle. The little witch knew that while the name of the melody was familiar the air was unknown to the boy, for Master Ralph had passed the last year in England.

“’Tis a right lively tune,” commented the lad approvingly, “and one that is quickly caught.”

So saying he tried to reproduce a note or two himself.

"Not quite, Ralph," cried Virginia, her eyes twinkling. "Try it after me."

She played the first strain softly. Quickly the boy repeated it. Then the next was taken up, and the next. Then the whole repeated until at last Ralph could perform the melody alone.

"There! Am I not progressing?" he cried, pausing for the praise that he felt was his due.

"You are indeed," laughed the girl. "Do you know that you are playing 'Yankee Doodle'? The tune to which the Americans are making the British dance?"

"Virginia Pendleton!" exclaimed Ralph, indignantly. "How dare you play me such a trick? To make me play that rebel tune!"

"'Tis British enough," cried the girl gleefully, her eyes full of mischief. "But like some other things that belonged to England, it has changed owners. Do you want to play it some more?"

"No," cried Ralph hotly. "I am not a rebel. The Pendletons have always been

loyal, and I will not be the first to bring a blot on the 'scutcheon."

"I play it," said Virginia defiantly. "I do not think that I hurt the name."

"But you are not a Pendleton," retorted Ralph. "And you were, you would sooner die than to do anything that savored of disloyalty. God save the King."

Putting his fife again to his lips he began playing "God Save the King."

"Ralph," cried Virginia, wrathfully, "if you do not stop that this instant, I will not teach you another thing."

But Ralph continued his performance. Angrily the girl resumed the playing of Yankee Doodle in her lustiest manner. Forgetful of the fact that they did not wish to be heard, the two antagonists strove with might and main to outdo each other. Soon the superior skill of the girl told. Louder and more triumphant Yankee Doodle floated upon the air. Fainter and weaker grew the strains of God Save the King, until spent and exhausted the boy leaned against a tree, leaving a clear field to his opponent.

"There!" cried Virginia with exultation,

tossing back her curls from her flushed face. "Don't try to beat with your God Save the King, any more, Master Ralph Pendleton—Yankee Doodle will whip every time. Hurrah! America forever! Liberty or death!"

"Zounds! what does all this mean?" exclaimed a voice, and turning, the boy and girl were startled at beholding Colonel Pendleton advancing toward them. "What's this I hear? I'll have no sedition talked in my household. Ralph, you shall be caned for this. Virginia, I am astonished. But you shall both be punished."

"Sir," said the boy manfully, "cane me if you will, but let Virgie go. She is a girl."

"A plague upon you," cried the Colonel testily. "Am I to be answered back by a child? Follow me into the house at once."

Turning upon his heel he strode toward the hall, leaving the trembling children to follow after him.

CHAPTER II

VIRGINIA'S STORY

COLONEL PENDLETON uttered not a word more until he had reached the precincts of the library. Then, seating himself in one of the low-seated high-backed chairs of the apartment, he faced the culprits sternly.

"Bring me a birchen rod from the cupboard, sir," was his command to his son.

Without a word the boy obeyed. Virginia, whose conscience had been stricken with remorse for the trouble which she had brought upon her playmate, now started forward.

"Oh, sir," she cried tremblingly, for the Colonel was intolerant of opposition in any form. "Oh, sir, Ralph ought not to be caned. Indeed he ought not. I alone am to blame."

"Don't try to shield the rascal, miss," uttered the Colonel peremptorily. "He deserves a severe thrashing, and he shall get it. Faith! is not a man's soul tried enough in

these times that he must hear treason preached in his own family? Off with your coat and waistcoat, sir! I'll flog the disloyalty out of you."

"But please, uncle, do listen," entreated Virginia tearfully. "Ralph isn't disloyal. I am the rebel. He wouldn't play Yankee Doodle at all, but was playing God Save the King."

The Colonel paused, rod in hand, and looked doubtfully at his son.

"Is this true?" he demanded.

"It is, sir," replied Ralph.

"And you did not countenance the playing of that rebel air, nor the words that I heard?"

"I am a Pendleton," returned the son proudly, "and not long from our gracious Majesty's dominions. Need I say more?"

"You need not," answered the father, his stern visage softening. "Your pardon, son. I should have known better than to doubt you. But when Virginia, the old Dominion, renounces her allegiance to the King, declares herself an independent sovereignty, and elects that scoundrel, Patrick Henry, for

Governor, why should a man not doubt his nearest and dearest?"

He sank back into his chair and stared moodily at them. The boy and the girl waited in respectful silence which was at length broken by Ralph venturing boldly:

"May we go now, sir?"

The Colonel started, and scowled slightly as his glance fell upon Virginia.

"You may go, my son. Virginia must stay. She has not yet received the punishment which, by her own confession, she richly deserves."

"Father, let Virgie go," pleaded the lad.

"Go," commanded the father. "Let me deal with Virginia as I see fit. And, Ralph, I will have no more fife music of any sort from you. Do you hear?"

"Yes, sir."

"Curb your tendencies in such lines," continued the father, "and amuse yourself with occupations befitting a gentleman. And hark ye further, Ralph!"

"Yes, father."

"Hold yourself in readiness to return on

the Lucinda, when she puts into port next month."

"Father," exclaimed Ralph in startled tones, "do you mean that I am to go back to England?"

"Precisely. I will not have you remain longer in this accursed country where treason breathes in the very air. Rash that I was to bid you home! 'Twill be but a short time until this rebellion will be crushed never to rise again. Then you may return. A plague upon it," he wound up bitterly, "who would have dreamed that the affair would have lasted so long?"

"But, father, must I go? I don't like to leave you and the others so soon again," faltered the son.

"I have decided, Ralph, so let's hear no more of it. Now go."

Amazed and bewildered the boy left the room. The Colonel turned to the trembling girl.

"Now, my young lady, tell me all about this affair," he commanded.

Virginia related the incident, not sparing herself in the recital.

“So you are a rebel,” remarked the Colonel briefly. Now that he knew that his son was not tainted with treason his wrath was fast disappearing. “Will you tell me why you are one?”

“Because,” replied the maiden in a low tone, “I believe that the colonies are right to resist his Majesty’s oppressive measures. Because taxation without representation is unjust, and as Englishmen we will not submit to injustice and coercion.”

“How glibly the child talks,” exclaimed the Colonel. “Truly, the land must be bewitched when even the children talk sedition! Where did you learn all this, Virginia? Surely not under my roof?”

“No, sir; not here.”

“Then where did you get such ideas? I have thought several times of late that I perceived rebellious tendencies in you, but I have not been sure until to-day. Does Evelyn or any other one of my family believe as you do?”

“No, sir; I am the only patriot here.”

The Colonel drew a breath of relief.

"Then tell me who has put this nonsense into your head?"

"No one, sir. I have heard the subject discussed many places. I could not help hearing it, sir. There has been nothing else spoken of anywhere. We girls listen and then we talk it over among ourselves. The most of us have decided that the colonies are right and so we are Whigs. But there are a few Tories."

"Whigs and Tories fiddlesticks!" ejaculated the Colonel. "You amaze me. Things have come to a pretty pass when girls get to talking politics. Whigs and Tories indeed! May I ask, miss, how long this thing has been going on?"

"Even since Parliament closed the port of Boston on account of what the citizens did to the tea. And I haven't tasted a drop of tea since," she added proudly.

"Why, child, that was two years ago," exclaimed the Colonel, raising his hands in astonishment. "Do you mean to tell me that you children have discussed this matter that long?"

"Yes, sir; we couldn't help it, you know,"

cried Virginia, her spirit rising under the mildness with which her information was received. "And oh, Uncle Ralph, please may I wear frocks made of cloth from our own place? I am the only Whig girl that I know who wears anything from England."

Colonel Pendleton surveyed the child for a few moments in silence, and then said :

"So you want to lay aside your pretty frocks, and put on linsey-woolsey? You want to show to the world that the Pendletons are harboring a rebel in their midst, eh? You want people to know that Ralph Pendleton has brought up a child that is faithless to the King? Virginia! Virginia! Is this the return for my kindness? Have I not taken you to my fireside, clothed and fed you, and brought you up as a child of my own? Is this your gratitude?"

"O, sir," cried the girl, weeping, "I know all that you have done for me, and I am not ungrateful. Believe me, I am not. But I cannot help but think that the colonies are right."

"Tut! Tut! what do you know about it?" cried the Colonel testily. "Leave such mat-

ters to older heads, and concern yourself with your embroidery and harpsichord as is seemly in a girl. Then will I believe that you are indeed grateful for the benefits you have received."

Virginia was silent for a little while, and then she said timidly :

"Uncle Ralph, do you know who I am?"

The Colonel started slightly as he heard the question.

"Know who you are? Why you are Virginia Pendleton, of course," he responded lightly.

"But I mean who I truly am," persevered the child. "Did I ever have a real father and a real mother who belonged to me just as you and Aunt Molly belong to Ralph and Evelyn? Did I, Uncle Ralph?"

Uncle Ralph took up a curiously carved snuff-box from the table near him and took a pinch of snuff before replying.

"Why yes, my child, of course. What a curious thing to ask! But they are both dead long ago, and I wouldn't bother about them if I were you."

"But how did you come to get me?" per-

sisted the girl. "How did I come to your house? Tell me all about it. Please do, uncle."

"I thought that you knew all there was to know," said the Colonel using the snuff vigorously. "I am sure that 'tis well known in the household. Aye, and in the colony also."

"No, uncle. I only know that you brought me here when I was a little bit of a girl from somewhere. Whenever I ask about it everybody puts me off with some excuse. Even Mammy Began won't tell me."

"I think that they tell you all that there is to tell. Why do you take such a notion now, Virginia?"

"Because I am fourteen years old," said the girl quickly, "and I am old enough to know all about myself. Please do tell me, Uncle Ralph. You don't know how some of the girls look at me sometimes when they talk of their families."

"If I tell you, will you promise me not to say anything more about it, Virginia? There is no use in talking over such things. Will you promise?"

"Yes, sir; I promise," said the girl eagerly.

“Then sit down, and I will tell you all there is to tell, though that is little enough.”

Virginia sat down obediently, holding her slender body stiffly erect as was the custom.

“It was a matter of twelve years ago,” began the Colonel, clearing his throat, “that I was returning to Virginia aboard the good ship Elizabeth after a trip of some months from Jamaica. Among the passengers were a lady and a child, a little girl of about two years, accompanied by a nurse. We had not been out of port two days before the lady was taken ill. Of course her malady was deemed seasickness, and little attention was paid to the matter by the rest of the passengers. Meantime the little one and I had become great friends. The child pleased me with her infantile ways, and, having two little ones of my own here in Virginia, I naturally became greatly interested in her. The mother’s illness soon became serious. An affection of the heart, I believe it was. Well, to make a long story short, the nurse had told her of my interest in the little girl, and so, knowing that her end was near, the mother sent for me.

“She told me that her husband had come

to America some time before, and that she had not heard from him in a year. She was convinced that he was dead, and she wished me to take her child, and to bring her up as my own. As she said that there was no one on whom the little one had any claim, I consented. The poor mother died the next day, and was buried at sea. I brought you, for you were the child, Virginia, to my home. You know the rest."

"Is that all?" asked Virginia who had followed the narrative with interest. "Did she not tell you her name, Uncle Ralph?"

"She did," answered the Colonel after a slight pause. "But as she did not wish you to bear that name, I have not spoken of it."

"What was it, uncle?"

"Nay, nay, child, do not ask me. Respect your mother's wishes and seek not to find what it was. Pendleton is an old and honored name. 'Twill not harm you to wear it until, perchance, in the future some Virginia youth may offer you another."

"Was my name truly Virginia?" asked the girl after a short pause.

"No; you were called 'baby' by both the

mother and the nurse. I do not know whether you had a name other than that. As Evelyn was about the same age, and also called 'baby,' we thought it best to give you a name. I called you after the colony—Virginia. Rightly too, it seems," he added, "since you also decry allegiance to the King. Now, child, think no more about this. You are happy at Forrest Hall. Drop the subject forever, and also this matter of rebellion. It befits not a girl to meddle with such things. Come, my dear! To please me sing God Save the King."

He rose and turned toward the harpsichord as he spoke. The girl drew her breath quickly. He had been kind to her, and to him she owed every comfort and necessity of life. She grieved to displease him, yet she could not sing that song. The King was cruel and unjust. He no longer deserved consideration from any true patriot.

"Please, uncle," she said chokingly, "do not ask me to sing that. I will gladly sing anything but that."

"Still obstinate?" cried the uncle. "Well, hark ye, girl! I will have no rebels about

me. Somehow I will get that idea out of your mind. Stay," as a sudden thought struck him, "do you still wish to change your silken frocks for those of linsey-woolsey?"

"Yes, sir," cried Virginia in delight.

"Very well," said the Colonel grimly. "Do so then. But mind! they are not to be put on and off at will. You cannot resume them until you come to me, and sing God Save the King willingly. Dost hear, Virginia?"

"I hear, sir."

"Then away with you. 'Twill not be long, I fancy, ere you will come for permission to sing the song, and be as loyal as the rest of us. The lack of personal adornment will bring you to your senses. It is the only way to manage the female character," he added as Virginia arose, and, after courtesying deeply, withdrew. "Keeping the little minx in coarse clothes will soon cure her of her sympathy for the rebels."

CHAPTER III

A GIRL'S SACRIFICE

WHEN Virginia came from the library she found Ralph waiting for her in the hall.

"Did it hurt much?" he asked sympathetically. "I was so sorry that you had to be punished. Why, Virgie, you're not crying!"

"No, indeed," replied Virginia. "He was just as good as could be. And he told me all about how I came to belong to the family. But I am so sorry, Ralph, that I played you such a trick. Now you must leave us and go back to England. And it's all my fault!" Her eyes filled with tears, and she took his hand affectionately within her own.

"Never mind, Virgie," said Ralph bravely repressing his own emotion. "I believe that it would have happened anyway. 'Twas only a question of time until he would have sent me to join Carter. I was always intended for the army."

"Yes; but I shouldn't think that he would want you away too now that Carter is gone. One of you ought to be at home. Both ought not to be in the army."

"Well, father didn't mean that Carter should be. He is the elder son and heir, you know. But when the colonies began having so much trouble nothing would do Carter but that he must go to England to offer his services to his Majesty. Father was proud of him, and I know that he will be pleased if I follow in his footsteps."

"But, Ralph, would you fight Virginians?" asked the girl reproachfully.

Ralph cleared his throat, and toyed with his lace frill before answering. Then he broke out boyishly.

"See here, Virgie. When I disobey father, or don't do what he tells me to, what does he do to me?"

"He thrashes you, of course."

"And that usually brings me to my senses, doesn't it? Well, that is what the King is doing to Virginians and the rest of the colonies. They're just like naughty children, and have to be whipped before they can see

reason. And I'm going to help do it too," he added pompously.

Virginia looked at him with a troubled expression, but presently her eyes brightened.

"Ralph," she said, "suppose Uncle Ralph had caned you just now. Would it have been right? You were not to blame at all for what happened. How would you have felt?"

"It would have been unjust, and I would have felt it so," answered the boy.

"Yes; you would have felt that it wasn't right," cried the girl. "And that is just the way with the colonies. They have tried to explain, and tried to explain to the King that he was treating them shamefully, but he wouldn't listen. So now they are just showing him that he can't keep on treating them unjustly. They are free and independent, and he can't whip them into his way of thinking. I do wish that you had been here instead of over in England this past year. I know that you would feel differently."

"No, I would not, Virgie," replied Ralph soberly. "A Pendleton is never anything but loyal, and I should always be so, no

matter where I was. I think that if father knew that he would not send me back to England. And I don't want to go—yet. I haven't been home long enough."

The children stood in silence, the cause of the colonies being forgotten for the moment in the nearer grief of parting.

"Don't let's quarrel any more," said the boy presently. "Let's have a good time until the Lucinda comes, anyway. A month is a long way off. A great deal might happen in that time. Perhaps father will change his mind, although there is small hope of that."

"Virginia! Ralph! where are you?" called a voice from the upper hall at this moment, and a lady appeared at the head of the stairs. "Are you ready to go? Ralph, has Valentine brought the coach around yet?"

"Yes, mother," answered Ralph, bounding up the steps to greet her. "It has just driven up. Is Evelyn dressed?"

"All ready and waiting," answered the lady in a somewhat querulous tone. "Where have you children been? Virginia, don't

stand there staring any longer. Get your bonnet and come to the coach at once."

Virginia hastened to obey. The lady descended the stairs in a very stately manner. She was tall, and her bearing was one of extreme hauteur. She crossed the wide space of the hall and entered the library, re-issuing therefrom a few moments later upon the arm of her husband. Down the stairway at the same moment came Ralph with his sister Evelyn, a black-eyed girl about the same age as Virginia. Her jet black hair was in striking contrast to the pink lutestring gown that she wore, and her slippers, with their high heels, clicked daintily on the steps. Behind them came Virginia. Old Valentine—who had been the family coachman for years—stood pompously beside the chariot, his ivories gleaming in a broad smile, his woolly pate uncovered in respectful deference.

The Colonel handed his wife into the coach, and Master Ralph did likewise with his sister and Virginia, then entered the vehicle after them. Valentine mounted the box, cracked his whip, and the huge, cumbersome coach drawn by four spirited horses started off,

leaving the Colonel gazing after it from the steps of the portico.

A few mornings later, Virginia sat in her own little chamber ruefully surveying the garments which Mammy Began had spread out upon the high canopied bed.

"Sho'ly, Miss Virgie, you ain't a gwine ter war no sich things!" exclaimed the old woman with disgust, for there was no aristocrat so exacting as the old southern darkey. "You all ain't no po' white trash. You'se quality folks, you is. An' quality done war no sich things."

"It is right for me to, mammy," returned Virginia. "So long as the country is in the state that it is, it is befitting her daughters to array themselves in garments made at home. I would wear them though they were of sack-cloth."

So saying, she began to don the articles one by one, although it must be confessed that she sighed a little at their texture. Muttering protests the while Mammy Began reluctantly assisted her to dress.

"But you ain't got no shoes, chile, laik dem cloes. What you gwine ter do 'bout

dat?" questioned the old negress. "Hyar's your purty slippers. Lem'me put dem on."

"Not those, mammy, please," said Virginia with something of regret in her tone for her one vanity was her feet. "Get me the calimanco shoes."

At length her toilet was completed, and she went down reluctantly to the dining-room. The family were already at the table.

"You're late, Virgie," cried Ralph as she entered. "The coffee's getting cold, and the—hello! What have you been doing to yourself?"

A flush crept over the girl's face as the eyes of the family were turned upon her. The Colonel saw her embarrassment, and mentally remarked that the cure was working. Madam Pendleton's face took on an annoyed expression, while Evelyn laughed disdainfully.

"Have you not made a mistake in allowing this?" asked Mrs. Pendleton of her husband in a low tone. "I fear that it will encourage her in her nonsense."

"On the contrary it will work a cure," smiled her husband. "Sometimes opposition but fans such things to greater heat. Unop-

posed, or rather encouraged to run their course, they will die of their own ardor. Virginia loves pretty frocks as well as most girls. Just so soon as she finds out for herself what it really means to be a rebel, I'll warrant you that King George will have no more faithful adherent than she. But hark ! let's listen to what the children are saying."

"Gracious, Virgie !" Evelyn was exclaiming petulantly. "I do hope that if we go to Richmond next Monday you will not go in such a frock. What would people say ? I shall die of shame if you do."

"Perchance, Evelyn, Virginia wishes to be on the popular side," said Mrs. Pendleton with sarcasm. "You know the traitors are to read that absurd Declaration of Independence, and I dare say that her apparel will please the rabble. Aye, and gain some applause mayhap. You would like that, Virginia, would you not ?"

"Nay, madam," said the girl quickly. Mrs. Pendleton had never liked the child, and no one was more conscious of the fact than Virginia. Although Colonel Pendleton was a wealthy man, and the care of the girl

nothing in an establishment like Forrest Hall, the lady regarded her as an interloper. The very mystery of her parentage increased her dislike. She looked at her now as Virginia spoke in her impulsive way, and felt her aversion intensified an hundredfold by the girl's appearance.

"Nay, madam," Virginia was saying, "I do not wish for applause, nor to be on the popular side. Squire Daniel says that no true patriot will wear aught that comes from England, and I am glad that Uncle Ralph let me show where my sympathies are."

"Well, I am glad that mine are not with a lot of traitors," cried Evelyn with a toss of her head. "You won't be so bold in parading your sentiments when General Howe whips the Americans, and Washington, and Patrick Henry, and Thomas Jefferson, and your Mr. Adams of Massachusetts Province, are sent over to England in irons to be tried for treason."

"They never will be," replied Virginia hotly. "The British haven't been able to do anything against General Washington yet, and they've been trying for more than a year.

Just look at our victory at Charleston! If they have such fine troops and excellent generals, and can beat the world with their army, why haven't they routed the Americans? Now why haven't they?"

"Well, because," began Evelyn, and then stopped, dismayed, not knowing how to continue. "Why haven't they, father?" she asked, turning to him in her dilemma.

"Why, Evelyn, are you going to let Virginia rout you like that?" laughed her father, who was rather enjoying the tilt, much to his wife's vexation. "No, no, my child! you must learn to stand up for your side better than that. Don't let an adversary instill doubt into your mind. Now Ralph here has been in England, but I've no doubt but that he could find some excuse for the army. Could you not, my son?"

"I heard them say in England that there were unforeseen difficulties in the way," answered Ralph quickly. "In fact that there was an obstacle in the nature of——"

"There is," interrupted Virginia wickedly. "There is General Washington."

"That will do, Virginia," admonished Mrs.

Pendleton. "Your faults are enough already without adding pertness and impoliteness to them. I think on the whole that the discussion had better be deferred to another time and place than the breakfast-table, anyway. Shall we really go to Richmond town Monday?" she asked of her husband.

"I think so, Molly. I want to hear that document for myself, and see what excuse the rebels can give for their conduct. You and the children may go if you prefer."

"Virginia can't go with us if she wears that frock, can she, mother?" spoke up Evelyn.

Mrs. Pendleton hesitated. Virginia's eyes filled as she noted the lady's indecision. Ralph saw the tears, and came to the rescue gallantly.

"Virgie need not ride in the chariot at all if she doesn't wish. I will take her behind me on my pony."

"Ralph Pendleton, you don't mean it?" gasped Evelyn. "Will you go with her in that dress?"

"Yes," answered Ralph, manfully. Virginia looked at him with gratitude. "Of course I would rather she wore a silken gown,

but if she thinks she is doing right, why I don't mind."

"Arrange the manner of your going among yourselves," said the Colonel, rising. "Only be sure to be on time for I dislike to be kept waiting."

The others arose also, and Virginia was about leaving the room when there was a loud laugh from the Colonel.

"My dear little rebel," he called, "come here." The girl went to him obediently. "What is this that I see?" he asked, indicating the dainty high-heeled shoes. "I thought that you were to dress entirely in articles made on the place."

"But these shoes are only calimanco," faltered Virginia.

"Come, come, my dear," laughed the Colonel. "Calimanco or satin, the principle is the same. They were made in England. You must be consistent or else renounce your principles altogether. Now either wear shoes, stockings, and everything in conformation with your avowed sympathies, or else resume your proper attire. There must be nothing half-way about it."

"Very well, sir," answered the girl meekly. She left the room, her face scarlet, her ears burning, followed by the laughter of the family.

"He is right," she murmured, as she reached her chamber, and drew off the offending shoes. "But oh dear! how can I give up my shoes and slippers?"

She brought them all forth. The high heeled, rosetted things making a brave showing as they stood in a row before her. Her eyes filled, and soon the sobs broke from her lips. She was only a little girl, and dainty shoes were very dear to her. The coarse articles made on the place were heavy and cumbersome, and it was a very real battle that the maiden fought with herself on that bright August morning. After a while she arose and bathed her face.

"There! I won't think anything more about it," she declared. "I'll just go right away to Uncle Eph and get him to make me a pair. It's right, and it is the only thing a little girl can do to show her patriotism. Uncle Ralph might have forbidden me to wear these garments at all, and I would have

felt much worse then. I wonder if Patty Carter and Polly Daniel felt as badly when they gave up their pretty things! Perhaps they did, but I haven't heard them say anything about it. What a vain child I must be!"

Putting on her shoes again, she drew a wide brimmed hat over her curls and was soon at Uncle Eph's cabin in the quarters. The negro protested at first, but overruling his objections, she finally obtained his consent to make the shoes for her as soon as possible.

Smiling and happy, Virginia left the cabin, and returned to the house.

CHAPTER IV

RICHMOND TOWN

MONDAY dawned bright and clear, and the inmates of Forrest Hall were astir early. The dew had not yet disappeared from the lush grasses when old Valentine brought the coach to the door, followed by a young black with Master Ralph's pony.

Mrs. Pendleton, Evelyn and the Colonel came out almost immediately and entered the chariot. The lady was attired in a rustling gown of yellow brocade while Evelyn wore her favorite pink lutestring. Presently Ralph, brave in velvets and satins with shiny buckles and delicate laces, made his appearance.

"Where is Virginia, Ralph?" asked his father. "Is she not ready yet? Tell Martha to ask her to come down instantly."

But as he was speaking Virginia's little figure became visible through the open door.

She came upon the portico with lagging steps, well knowing that her apparel would be the subject of remark. Ralph's countenance fell as he caught sight of her. She was clothed in garments made of cloth woven on the place, with thick, heavy shoes, such as were worn by the negroes upon her feet, and a broad-brimmed straw hat upon her head.

"Virginia, I really do think that if you will wear such things, you should remain at home," exclaimed Evelyn in an irritated tone. Mrs. Pendleton regarded the girl with a disgusted expression upon her face.

"Say nothing further, Evelyn," interposed her father. "I prefer that Virginia should wear that garb wherever she goes. So long as she feels as she does, I will have her use no other. If Ralph does not mind taking her, she may ride with him. Otherwise, she will have to come with us."

"Do you mind very much, Ralph?" asked Virginia in a low tone.

"Not so much but that I will take you, Virgie," responded the boy manfully. "You are as pretty as a posy no matter what you have on, and after all what difference does it

make to a gentleman whether a lady wears silk or cotton?"

"True for you, my boy," laughed the Colonel who had overheard the remark. He would not have been so complaisant had one of his own children been so arrayed.

"Ralph, what nonsense is that?" exclaimed his mother. "I desire that you do not abet Virginia in her naughtiness. Of course it matters to a gentleman whether a lady is well dressed or not."

"It is kind of you not to care, Ralph," whispered Virginia as she seated herself on the pillion behind the boy, and slipped her arms about him for support. "I think that you are the very nicest boy that I know."

"Nicer than Joe Daniel?" queried Ralph, for Joe was a great favorite with Virginia.

"Yes; nicer even than Joe though he is a patriot," answered Virginia laughing.

"You like everybody who is a patriot, don't you?"

"Everybody that I know. But I expect that there are some people that I wouldn't like even though they were patriots. I do

wish that you and Uncle Ralph were patriots ! I don't see how you can help being so."

"It would be impossible for us to be other than we are," remarked Ralph. "I am anxious to hear how that Declaration reads. I'd like to know what the rebels have to say for themselves. We fellows used to talk it over, in England, and we wondered what excuse they could make for their conduct. They ought to help pay the expenses of the French and Indian wars, you know."

"Squire Daniel says that we did help in many ways, Ralph. We quartered the troops, and sent companies from the colonies to the frontiers. And it was our own people who had to suffer all the depredations of the savages. Besides, it isn't because we do not want to help share the expenses with the mother country, but it is because she claims a right to tax us without giving us a voice in the laws that govern us. No Englishman will submit to having his rights encroached upon, and you know it."

"Yes ; I know that, Virgie. But how you talk ! Where did you learn so much ?"

"Every one talks it," answered the girl,

“but I get it mostly at Squire Daniel’s. He believes that the young folks should understand all about such things, and so he talks to us. They are good patriots, you know.”

“I know that they are about the worst rebels in the colony,” growled Ralph.

“There are many of them, Ralph. Indeed, I believe that there are but few Tories remaining among us. Lord Dunmore’s action in trying to incite the blacks to insurrection, and the burning of Norfolk was a good thing for the cause. It made many turn over to the colonists’ side who had been against us before. Even Uncle Ralph thought that he did wrong.”

“Lord Dunmore was a scoundrel!” exclaimed Ralph. “But because his Majesty’s representative happened to be a knave is no reason why people should be disloyal to their king.”

Thus they rode along. The coach was some distance ahead of them. The boy and the girl conversing sometimes jestingly, sometimes seriously upon the great war now raging between the colonies and the mother country, each repeating arguments and dis-

courses heard from the older people, and each loyally and sometimes half angrily espousing his or her cause.

The woods were picturesque in glade and greenery. Birds warbled in the tree-tops. The breeze rustled the leaves gently. Sometimes the road wound near the river, and then the mellow music of the laughing waters could be heard foaming over moss clad rocks. Over all shone the great white light of the sun making the atmosphere warm and golden. In the distance near the horizon could be seen piles of clouds which lay against the blue of the sky like great snow-drifts. Soon they descried the hills of Richmond town, and Ralph urged his pony to greater speed. Crossing Bloody Run where Nathaniel Bacon had defeated the Indians a hundred years before they paused as they reached the hill upon which stood the old church of St. John.

“Look, children,” called the Colonel, stopping the chariot. “There is as fine a view as you will ever see anywhere.”

The little party looked at the scene before them. Below them spread the majestic river

with its picturesque falls and rapids foaming over rocks some of which rose into beautiful little islands. Upon its broad bosom glittered the white sails of barks, and close in to the land some sloops lay at anchor. At the foot of the hill lay the town then a village of but a few hundred inhabitants. The hamlet straggled along the sides of a sparkling and lively creek whose waters emptied into the James and were thence borne to the sea.

The undulations of the hills and fields, the old church embosomed in trees and surrounded by hillocks which were the mansions of the dead, the noble river with its flashing rapids, murmuring falls and poetic mists, the islands, the valley in which the little town lay, and everywhere the prodigious extent of wilderness, made a scene of grandeur, beauty and variety.

“Oh,” breathed Virginia. “Isn’t it beautiful, Ralph?”

“It is indeed,” answered the lad solemnly. “There is nothing like it anywhere. I am glad that I am a Virginian. And ’tis but a little while that the privilege will be mine of gazing upon that majestic river and these hills.”

Virginia could not reply. Her heart was too full. Perhaps the same feeling actuated the father that filled the breast of the son, for he removed his cocked hat, holding it in his hand while he gazed with reverence upon the scene. Then, without further words, they resumed their journey, and soon entered the town.

Richmond presented a lively aspect. Court day was always a holiday for all the countryside, and on this occasion it was especially so for the news that the Declaration of Independence was to be read brought more than the usual quota of guests to the village. Men were anxious to hear in what terms the declaration of their rights had been couched; and so from every direction the people came. On horseback, in wagons, or afoot. The hunter from the back woods, the owner of a few acres side by side with the lordly proprietor of many; the grinning heedless negro and the well-bred gentleman in his coach. All classes assembled to-day in indiscriminate confusion upon the court-house green to hear the momentous declaration.

Colonel Pendleton and his family made

their way to the crowded square where they were fortunate enough to secure places near the speaker's stand which was surrounded by two hundred militia. A shout went up as the reader ascended the platform, succeeded by a solemn hush as, in deep tones, he began the magnificent document:

“ ‘ When in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the bonds which have connected them with another, and to assume, among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and of nature's God entitle them, a decent respect for the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the cause which impels them to the separation.’ ”

Throughout the reading the stillness was intense. The people seemed scarcely to breathe, so attentively were they listening. Virginia stood with her eyes uplifted to the speaker's face, her lips parted as if to drink in the grand words. At first Ralph listened indifferently, but after the first few sentences he began to look up. Then, as the reader continued to pour forth the accusations by which

the King of England was arraigned before the world, he drew closer to the platform as if fascinated and could look away no more.

“ ‘ We, therefore, ’ ” concluded the reader, “ ‘ the representatives of the United States of America in general Congress assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do in the name and by the authority of the good people of these colonies, solemnly publish and declare that these united colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States ; that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British crown, and all political connection between them and the state of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved, and that, as free and independent States, they have full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and do all other acts and things which independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with firm reliance upon the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor. ’ ”

The reader looked into the earnest faces before him.

“ ‘Now will America’s sons her fame increase,
In arms and science, with glory, honor and peace,’ ”

he said. “We stand before the nations as one of them. We are at the beginning of a new era. It will depend upon us, the people, whether we justify the confidence shown in us by these men, our representatives. The question is one that should strike home to every heart. Will we also support this Declaration with ‘our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor’? Will we?” he paused solemnly.

“Aye! Aye!” came the answer with a shout.

“Huzzah! Huzzah!”

“Then three cheers for the new United States, men,” cried the speaker.

“Hip, hip, hurrah!” yelled the crowd, and Ralph, carried away by the intensity of emotion, joined in heartily.

“My son,” spoke the Colonel, laying a hand upon his shoulder, blank amazement depicted upon his countenance, “do you know what you are doing?”

The boy answered not a word, but, hanging his head, turned and stole out of the crowd.

“Three cheers for General Washington and the Continental army,” called a voice, and the people gave them lustily.

At this instant the British flag which had waved proudly from a staff on the village green was seen to totter. It swayed for a moment and then fell to the ground. A great shout went up as the Continental flag was run up in its place. Then the militia re-echoed the universal joy with three volleys of small arms. The drums and fifes struck up Yankee Doodle, and the people, with satisfaction depicted upon their countenances, mingled together exchanging congratulations.

Mrs. Pendleton and Evelyn to their mortification found themselves much more noticeable than was Virginia. Men, women and children with the true interests of their country at heart were marked by a simplicity of garb hitherto unknown. Luxury loving though the Virginians were, when it became a matter of principle, finery of all sorts was ruthlessly sacrificed to the demands of the

hour. It was not a time for dress, and simplicity was the keynote of the day. Thus Virginia found that she had plenty of company, and it was Mrs. Pendleton and her daughter and ladies of the same Tory tendencies who were conspicuous by their array.

The Pendletons soon engaged in conversation with a group as gorgeously attired as themselves, while Virginia, unnoticed by them, strayed away from the crowd looking everywhere for Ralph.

"Give you good-day, my little maid," said a voice presently, and Virginia turned with an exclamation of joy to greet the portly man with good-humored face who had accosted her.

"O, Squire Daniel, how do you do? Are Polly and Joe here?"

"To be sure they are," answered the Squire. "We've been looking for you everywhere. We want you and Ralph, and Evelyn too if she will, to go home with us for dinner. We will come back in time to see the illuminations to-night."

"We will be glad to go, I am sure," said Virginia, with delight, "but I don't know

where Ralph is. I lost sight of him just after the reading of the Declaration."

"I think that I saw him riding off in that direction," said the Squire, pointing toward the road over which they had come to the town. "Perhaps he has gone to some of his friends."

"It is strange," said Virginia, troubled. She had been so absorbed that she had not witnessed Ralph's action. "I do not see why he should do this way. It is not like him."

"Never mind! He'll turn up all right. Wasn't the Declaration fine? I declare I feel as if I could whip all King George's troops single-handed and alone after hearing it. I tell you that that will give his Majesty's ministers something to think about."

"It was grand," declared Virginia, her eyes shining.

"Well, well, I wonder what Colonel Pendleton thought of it! You hunt up Ralph while I talk to him a little while. That paper ought to make him see the error of his ways if anything will. Mind! we will be at Ege's inn where you can meet us. And don't

be later than an hour from now, or we'll miss Aunt Rhody's fried chicken."

The Squire hurried off, and Virginia wandered disconsolately in the direction Ralph had taken. She did not like to return to Mrs. Pendleton because of Evelyn's desire not to be seen with her in the garb she wore, and she could not but wonder why Ralph had gone off as he had. So, half unconsciously, she retraced the road by which they had entered the village, and presently was amazed to find herself in front of the old church of St. John.

"How far I have come," she exclaimed as she realized where she was. "Why, there's Ralph's pony! I wonder what he came here for? I am so glad that I have found him."

Entering the yard of the church she gave it a hasty inspection, but seeing no signs of the boy, hurried on into the building.

"Ralph, Ralph, are you here?" she called softly, trying to accustom her eyes to the darkened interior of the sanctuary. A low groan was her only answer, and Virginia ran quickly toward the place whence it came.

Ralph lay prone upon the floor of the church, his face buried in his hands.

“O, Ralph, what is it? Are you hurt?” cried the girl in alarm, kneeling beside him.
“What has happened? Do tell me.”

CHAPTER V

AN INTERESTING STRANGER

AGAIN the boy groaned, and turned such a woebegone looking face toward her that the girl was frightened.

“Dear Ralph, are you ill? Did you hurt yourself? What is the matter?”

“Didn’t you hear what I did?” asked Ralph, in such distressed tones that tears came to Virginia’s eyes. “I hurrahed for the colonies. And I am a Pendleton!”

“Ralph, you did what?” The girl was overcome with amazement. She could scarcely credit her ears. Ralph, a Pendleton, to shout for the colonies! There must be some mistake.

“Yes; you may well look your astonishment, Virgie. And father—you should have seen his face! I can never look at him again.” The boy sighed deeply and covered his face with his hands.

“Why,” asked Virginia, “why did you do it, Ralph?”

“I don’t know,” answered Ralph slowly. “There must have been some sorcery about that paper, for as I listened it seemed to me that there was no other side. That the colonies were right. It was all the fault of the Declaration.”

“And I would that all who heard those words were affected in like manner, my boy,” spoke a voice from the recesses of the church.

Ralph sprang to his feet, and Virginia uttered a little cry as a stranger advanced toward them. He was tall, and though his movements were somewhat awkward, yet there was much of command in his mien. His mouth was rather stern, but it was full of character; his forehead very broad and high was tanned and freckled. He was carefully arrayed in a dressed wig, black small clothes, and a scarlet cloak hung from his shoulders. He came toward the children, smiling at them in such a sweet way that their alarm vanished, and both felt drawn to him.

“And so you were moved by the Declaration, my son?” he asked. “Will you tell me

why you regret having cheered for the colonies?"

"I am a loyalist," answered the boy, "and the son of a loyalist. Why I cheered, I know not, but it grieves me that I should have been disloyal even for a moment."

"Who is your father, boy? I seem not to know your face, and yet it hath a puzzling resemblance to some one whom I ought to know."

"Colonel Ralph Pendleton is my father, and Ralph is also my name."

"Ah, yes. I have not seen Ralph Pendleton for some time. He would not attend the House of Burgesses longer after it was dissolved by Lord Dunmore, and hath kept well to himself since."

"My father did not altogether approve of Lord Dunmore's actions," said Ralph; "yet neither does he approve of the acts of Mr. Henry and the other patriots. We were unfortunate in having Lord Dunmore as a governor. Another man might have been better for his Majesty's cause. Yet my father would rather have Lord Dunmore for governor, for whatever manner of man he was, he was still the

representative of the King, than to be obliged to know that Virginia is under the rule of Patrick Henry. He is a bold rebel."

"But a God fearing one," said the stranger gently. "And while not a representative of the King he is the representative of a higher power than the King's—the people's."

"I have been in England for the past year," said Ralph, "and there the talk is that the King is the supreme power. Englishmen submit to his rule there. They do not consider themselves oppressed because they must pay taxes."

"Because they have a voice in the making of their own laws, and can regulate those taxes to please themselves. Because King George has not taken from them certain inalienable rights and privileges which belong to them. How long, think you, boy, would Englishmen submit to having the rights of the Magna Charta annulled? Would they stand it?"

"No, no," replied Ralph, "they would not."

"Then because we happen to be on this side of the water does it follow that we must

submit to be tyrannized over without protest? Does it follow on that account that we must have governors set up over us without regard to our wishes? That trial by jury must be denied us? That the murderous savages must be incited to destroy our homes and slay our families with impunity? Would Englishmen submit to these things, think you?"

"No," said Ralph again. "They would not."

"They would not," echoed the stranger. "They would not be Englishmen and they did. For these reasons, and for other causes as weighty, the colonies have declared war against the mother country. Because liberty is so dear to us we will not submit to chains and slavery. It hath always happened, it will always happen, that whenever kings become tyrants, men are raised up to confute and confuse those tyrannies. Thus Cæsar had his Brutus; Charles the First his Cromwell; and George the Third should have profited by their example—but he did not. The colonies submitted long to wrong. They petitioned and supplicated, but to no avail.

And now the revolution is upon us. Out of it hath grown a new country. Whatever may be the result we have taken our stand before the nations of the world, as free and independent States. They who wrote the document have done better than they knew when even a boy—of loyal family and tradition—is moved out of himself by it.”

“Sir,” said Ralph, “I do not know who you are, but I know that your words impress me deeply. I fear to talk further with you. I cannot answer you. I am confused and perplexed by the day’s happenings. My father was right when he said that I must return to England. The air does indeed breathe treason.”

“Not treason, my lad, but liberty. Would you have us bondsmen, or lie inactive under indignities that our brethren over the sea chopped off Charles the First’s head for? But I will not talk further to you, my son. I would not stir up confusion in your breast, nor make a breach betwixt you and your father. But hark ye, Master Pendleton! You will soon arrive at man’s estate. When you do so, take no man’s opinion for yours with-

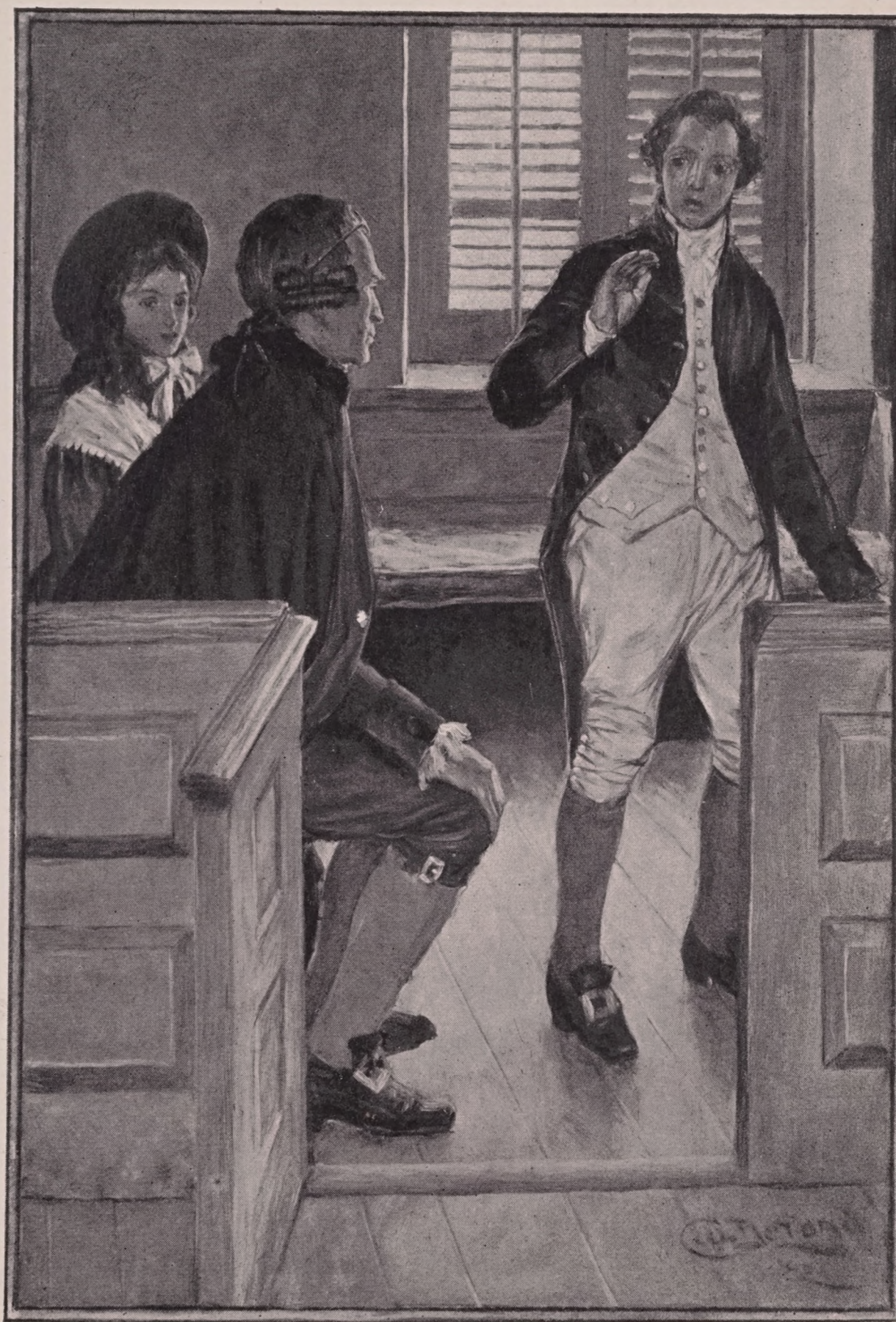
out first finding out your own convictions in the matter. Be no man's follower. Do not be a Whig because your father is one, nor yet a Tory for the same reason. Reflect upon both sides, and when once you decide for yourself which is in the right, stick to it regardless of consequences. Thus do I speak to you, for I perceive that you are a lad of parts."

"I thank you, sir," answered Ralph courteously. "Will you not favor me with your name that I may remember both the name and the advice with gratitude?"

A smile lighted up the rugged face of the stranger and he gazed at them for a few moments without replying. Then drawing Virginia to him, he said, as he toyed with her curls :

"This little maiden will, I perceive by her garments, be well pleased with my name. As for you, Master Pendleton, I am not so sure, for you are but indifferent to our cause. I am Patrick Henry."

"The Governor!" ejaculated Virginia looking at him with delight. "Is it really Mr. Henry?"



"I AM PATRICK HENRY"

“It is,” answered Patrick Henry. “I need not ask which side you espouse. You are a patriot. You wear none of the proscribed articles of dress. Come now! tell me how much tea do you drink?”

“O, not any,” cried Virginia warmly. “I have not tasted it since the Boston Port Bill went into effect.”

“Why, what a little patriot you are,” laughed the Governor. “How old are you, my dear?”

“I am fourteen.”

“And what is your name?”

“I don’t really know,” answered Virginia, her face clouding at the question. “But Colonel Pendleton lets me wear his name, and he named me—Virginia.”

“So you are the little one whom Ralph Pendleton took to his home some years ago, are you?” Mr. Henry drew the child closer to him. Ralph who had recovered from the embarrassment into which the announcement of the stranger’s identity had thrown him now broke in impulsively :

“Mr. Henry, I offer you my apology, sir, for the manner in which I spoke of you, I ——”

"Tut, tut, lad! 'Twas nothing! If Patrick Henry has no worse to endure than such remarks as yours, he will be better off than most men. Now is it not strange, children, that both of you have been brought up together, and yet one is a patriot, and the other a loyalist?"

"No, sir," answered Virginia naively. "Ralph couldn't help being a loyalist because he is a Pendleton. I am not, you know."

"I see. Are you not afraid that she will contaminate your loyalistic tendencies?" And Mr. Henry glanced keenly at the boy.

"I am afraid that they are contaminated already," sighed the boy, a troubled look coming over his face.

"Well, we won't go into that any more, my boy. Think it over, and if you decide for the King I won't blame you. If at any time I can serve you I will be happy to do so. Don't you and Master Ralph ever quarrel over your politics?" he asked turning again to Virginia.

"Sometimes," admitted the girl. "And I did play a mean trick on him."

"How was that, my dear?"

Virginia told him briefly of her lesson of Yankee Doodle, and how the tune had triumphed over God Save the King. The Governor laughed heartily at the recital.

"I should like you both to come to visit me," he said, rising, after some further conversation. "I will soon have my family at Williamsburg, and we will be most happy to welcome you there at any time. I think you would be great friends with my little flock. Present my compliments to your father. Now, good-bye to you both."

He shook hands with them warmly. Then with a grave salutation left the church, the boy and girl courtesying as long as he was in sight. Drawing a deep breath they stared at each other for a moment in silence.

"Well," at length gasped the girl. "Isn't he just the nicest man you ever did see, Ralph?"

"He was certainly very kind," answered the boy, "and vastly different from the man that I had heard he was. I wonder what father will say of him! Virgie," he exclaimed, suddenly, "do you know that I do not feel like the same boy that I was this morning?"

"You are beginning to believe on our side, aren't you?" asked Virginia with startling directness.

"I am afraid so, and I fear to meet father. I wish I could go somewhere until I could get straightened out before I meet him. My mind is all muddled up."

"Why Squire Daniel asked us to go home with him," cried Virginia with sudden remembrance. "We were to meet him and Polly and Joe in an hour's time at Ege's inn. Has it been an hour since I came here?"

"Yes," answered Ralph. "I am sure that it has been that long. But let us go anyway. They may be waiting for us, and if they are not we can go straight on to Pine Grove. How will we let father know?"

"The Squire was going to talk to him," answered Virginia. "He would be sure to tell him that we were going, for he wished Evelyn to go too."

"Then come on," said Ralph. "And, Virgie, don't let's talk of the colonies any more to-day. Will you not?"

"I won't to you, Ralph," promised Virginia,

“but I can’t help but talk to the Squire and Joe. They always do, and they will expect it of me. But they won’t say much to you because they know how your family feel.”

“All right. Come on, Virgie.”

The two left the church and mounting the pony soon reëntered Richmond town.

CHAPTER VI

THE THIRTEEN BAND

RALPH and Virginia found a merry company awaiting them at Ege's inn. The girls swooped upon Virginia, who seemed to be a general favorite, almost smothering her with kisses, while the boys greeted Ralph cordially.

"You are to ride in the coach with me," announced Polly Daniel, a pretty black eyed maiden, to Virginia, drawing her a little apart from the others. "I haven't seen you for ages and I have so much to tell you. And oh, Virgie, how did you get the Pendletons' consent to wear that frock?"

"I think Uncle Ralph hopes to cure me of being a rebel," and Virginia laughed roguishly. "O, Polly, while Ralph and I were in the church just now Mr. Henry came in, and he talked to us a long time."

"Virginia Pendleton, not the new Governor?" gasped Polly.

“Yes; Uncle Ralph used to know him and he said that he was awkward and uncouth but he’s just as fine a man as Uncle Ralph is or your father. And he asked us to come to see him.”

“I wish I had been there!” exclaimed Polly looking at her friend with a tinge of envy. “But maybe I will get to see him when he moves to Williamsburg. Father knows him well, and I know parts of the great speech he made in St. John’s church last year by heart. ‘Is life so dear or peace so sweet!’” she exclaimed striking an attitude, “‘as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty, or give me death.’”

“Polly, what on earth are you doing?” cried the Squire, coming over to the group that had formed about Polly and Virginia. “This isn’t any time for speechifying. If you young people don’t get to that fried chicken soon it will be give me food or give me death.”

Laughing and jesting the young folks

scrambled into their respective conveyances and were soon at Pine Grove, as the Squire's fine old mansion was called. The fried chicken and other viands of a regular Virginia dinner were done ample justice to by the healthy appetites. Then the young people trooped out under the trees for romping and games.

"See here, boys and girls," cried Virginia, after "Here we go round the Mulberry Bush," "Oats, pease, beans, and barley grow," and numerous other games had been played. "I think we ought to do something worthy of the day."

"Of course, we ought," cried Polly. "We never had a Declaration of Independence before, and we ought to celebrate. What shall we do?"

"The boys are not all here," remarked Joe Daniel, a lad about Ralph's age, "else we could have a parade. We have a fine regiment."

"We can parade anyway," cried Polly. "Let's form a company of our own. Get your drum, Joe."

"All right," answered Joe, "and I'll bring

my fifes too. Who can play a fife besides Virginia? Ralph, can't you?"

Ralph had drawn a little apart, when the parade was proposed, and stood with clouded face uncertain whether or not to leave. Virginia gave a look at the boy's face and broke in quickly before he could reply.

"Let's have the music without the parade, please, Joe. Ralph plays some things real well on the fife."

"All right," acquiesced Joe good-humoredly, and went after the instruments, returning with them quickly. He handed Ralph and Virginia each a fife. Ralph took the pipe with hesitation. His father's command was ringing in his ears: "Confine your tastes to lines more befitting a gentleman," he had said.

"But it would be churlish to refuse," thought the boy. "Father would be the first to say so." So he joined Joe and Virginia. Soon the rousing notes of "Old King Cole," "Sailors' Hornpipe," and other lively airs floated through the grove. Tune after tune followed. Presently Joe launched into Yankee Doodle, and inspired by the stirring strains, the children sent up a shout.

“Forward march!” cried Joe strutting around like a turkey cock. “Come on! Form in line, all of you. Come, Ralph! Come, Virginia!”

The children dropped into line. Virginia was beside Joe instantly. So intent was she upon the music that she did not notice that Ralph remained seated, the fife held listlessly in his hand.

“I will be glad to go back to England,” thought the boy with bitterness. “There everybody thinks alike anyway. While here—why I’ve known Polly and Joe and the others all my life, but I’m different from them. I wish I hadn’t come.”

At this instant a little hand was slipped into his, and Virginia stood beside him while Polly, Joe and the other children thronged about him.

“We’re awfully sorry, old fellow,” said Joe with boyish bluntness. “We forgot how you felt on the subject. Forgive us, won’t you?”

“It’s all right,” declared Ralph choking back the emotion that welled up at this expression of regard. “I ought not to have

come, but I didn't realize how different it would be from what it used to be."

"It's all because you've been in England so long," cried Polly. "I just know that if you had been here instead of over there, you would have been as big a patriot as any of us. Wouldn't you, now?"

"I don't know. I—yes, I expect that I would. Now see here," said Ralph with determination, "just because I am a Tory you need not give up your games, or anything you were going to do, on my account. I guess I can stand it. I might as well get used to things first as last," he added with something of his father's grimness. "I am apt to see a great deal of this sort of thing anywhere in the colony; so go ahead."

"Do you mean that, Ralph?" asked Polly.

"Yes; I do," answered Ralph, feeling that he was not lonesome any longer and not so different after all. "Whenever you do anything that I can't join, I'll stop, and you needn't think anything about it, will you?"

"No; we won't. And for a Tory, Ralph Pendleton, I think you are the nicest one that

I ever saw," declared Polly. "I only wish that they were all like you."

"Well, what are you going to do now?" asked Ralph, as they seated themselves once more under the trees.

"I think that it would be nice if we could form a sort of band," suggested Virginia. "I heard Mrs. Page say that the girls in Massachusetts Province had formed themselves into bands, and that they knit socks, made shirts and picked lint for the soldiers. Why couldn't we do that too?"

"The very thing," cried the girls in a chorus. "How glad we are that you thought of it, Virginia. How shall we begin?"

"We will have to ask some of our mothers to help us," put in Polly wisely. "I think that this will be a great deal better than parading, though that is fun. If we do this we will be helping our country if we can't fight."

"That's all right for you girls, but where do we boys come in?" cried Joe. "We can't fight either; neither can we sew. I think it's mean to get up something that we boys can't do too."

"It seems to me," cried Virginia, her eyes

flashing, "that if I were you boys I'd learn all that I could about soldiering. Then if the war lasts long enough you will be ready to fight the right way. I wouldn't worry about being a boy if I were one. I'd just learn how to fight."

"Why I believe you would," laughed Joe. "And you would make a good boy too, Virginia."

"Virginia is right," remarked Ralph. "I am going to do just as she says. I am going to learn all that I can about fighting, and just as soon as it is possible I shall join the army."

"I am going to do the same thing," cried Joe. "Let's promise each other, Ralph, that if we meet in battle we won't fight each other. It's too bad that such a good fellow as you is on the wrong side."

Ralph made no reply to this speech. Everybody seemed to be thinking, when all at once Polly called out:

"Let's call it 'The Thirteen Band.' After the thirteen colonies, you know. And everybody must wear the number thirteen about her, or else be dealt with as a traitor."

"That's fine, Polly," called one of the boys.

“ We can come in on that too. We boys can be The Thirteen Band, and learn how to fight, and you girls can be the part of it that sews for the soldiers.”

And so then and there was formed a band called The Thirteen Band, whose functions embraced the wide scope of fighting, sewing, knitting and picking lint. The merriment had died away, and in the place of the laughing boys and girls of a short time before, a group of young people with sober, serious faces discussed the problem of how to be of use to their country in her time of need.

Is it any wonder that the colonies succeeded in their struggle with the greatest power in the world when even the children were imbued with such a spirit of devotion ?

CHAPTER VII

A SAD ACCIDENT

It was September. The doors of the great hall of the mansion were open, and the casements framed the landscape like a picture. On the steps of the front portico Virginia stood watching the sun setting in a golden blaze of glory behind the western hills.

A tame deer, her particular pet, that had been browsing under the oaks, ceased his munching and came with slow stately steps to her side. The girl turned from the gorgeous spectacle before her, and laying her hand gently on the animal's head exclaimed :

“ Pretty creature ! Do you want to be loved ? You pretty Mounty ! ”

For answer the deer rubbed his head against her. Virginia lavished caresses upon him, calling him endearing names the while. Presently Evelyn came to the door.

“Mother wishes you to come to her in the sitting-room, Virgie,” she said. “Let Mounty come to me. Come, Mounty! Pretty creature!”

But the animal bounded up the steps after Virginia as she started for the hall.

“Mounty, Mounty,” called Evelyn angrily. “Virginia, don’t let him go into the hall. You know mother won’t like it.”

Virginia tried to drive her pet back. Evelyn, enraged that the animal would not come at her bidding, struck him a sharp blow with a stick that she had picked up. The deer jumped into the hall. Virginia, hoping that as soon as he lost sight of her he would run out through the other entrance, ran into the sitting-room, and tried to close the door behind her. But the creature was too quick for her, and leaped through the aperture before she could get the door shut, startling the occupants of the apartment by his abrupt entrance.

Mrs. Pendleton sat on one side with her knitting. At her feet a little colored pet was learning to sew. An old black woman was at the table cutting out the negroes’ winter

clothes. Near an open window Ralph sat, a book in his hand.

“Virginia,” cried Mrs. Pendleton dropping her knitting, “what does this mean? Take that animal out of here instantly.”

“I didn’t intend him to come in,” answered Virginia, making frantic efforts to drive the deer out, “but he would follow me.”

“Wait! I’ll help to get him out.” And Ralph sprang to his feet, letting his book fall to the floor. “Stand aside, Virgie, so that he can have a clear passage.”

Virginia stepped to one side. Ralph rushed after the creature with boyish delight, and, after driving him around the room, succeeded in getting him headed toward the door when Evelyn appeared directly in front of the entrance. The frightened animal paused for the space of a second, then turned in the endeavor to find another exit, and found himself directly in front of a large pier glass. Spying his own reflection in the mirror the deer made a wild dash into the glass. A crash followed. The now thoroughly terrorized animal rushed this way and that in his efforts to escape. Finally catching sight of the open

window near which Ralph had been sitting he plunged through the opening and was gone.

“Oh, won’t you catch it now,” cried Evelyn who was the first to recover from the shock of the accident. “Gracious, but you’ll get ‘the green doctor’!”

“It wasn’t Virgie’s fault any more than it was yours,” cried Ralph indignantly. “If you hadn’t come up just when you did Mounty would have gone through the door all right, and this wouldn’t have happened.”

“How did I know that you were trying to get him out,” replied his sister wrathfully. “If Virginia hadn’t let him follow her in, it wouldn’t have occurred. I told her not to do it.”

“Certainly it was Virginia’s fault,” remarked Mrs. Pendleton in a cold metallic voice. “As Evelyn says she should not have allowed the creature to follow her into the house. It merits punishment which she richly deserves. I can’t think what your father will say when he finds that glass broken. See! it is entirely demolished, and not another to be had this side of England. Martha, bring me my whip.”

The black girl obediently brought a small green horse whip with a silver head from a cupboard, and handed it to her mistress. It was one carried by the lady in riding, and sometimes used as a means of correction, and by this latter use had been nicknamed by the children, "the green doctor."

"Come here, Virginia," said the lady in hard accents.

Virginia was very pale though she said never a word. A punishment was always a severe ordeal to the sensitive girl. It seemed to her an indignity to be whipped as the blacks were, and usually she did not submit without a rebellious feeling of injustice. But to-day she felt that she should have been more careful; so without a word she advanced to receive her chastisement. But Ralph threw himself between her and his mother.

"Mother, mother," he cried. "Don't whip Virgie. Indeed she was not more to blame than either Evelyn or I. Let me take the whipping for all three of us."

"Ralph, I am astonished," exclaimed his mother in amazement. Well she might be, for children then submitted to their parents

without protest, no matter how great the wrong. "Shall I not maintain the discipline of my own household as seems to me best? Stand aside, sir. Your father shall hear of this."

"Yes, Ralph, please do," pleaded Virginia, fearful of what the consequences might be to the boy if he persisted. "I don't mind the caning. After all I deserve it."

Without more ado Mrs. Pendleton pushed her son to one side, and applied the lash vigorously to the girl's back. Virginia closed her lips tightly together and clenched her little hands in the effort to keep back the sobs that convulsed her frame.

"There!" exclaimed Mrs. Pendleton. "Perhaps at another time you will be more careful. Go to your room and let me see no more of you until breakfast. Ralph, stay where you are." For Ralph had started after Virginia.

Virginia ascended to her little chamber. Climbing upon the bed she buried her face in the pillows, and indulged in a good cry. The twilight came on. Below she could hear the preparations being made for the evening meal; the pleasant clatter of the china, and

the hurrying to and fro of the blacks in their passage from kitchen to dining-room. At length the noise of the supper was over, and she heard the rumble of the coach as it was driven round to the door, heard the family enter, and the crack of the whip as the carriage rolled off.

Her tears flowed afresh as she remembered that this was the night of a merrymaking at one of the neighboring plantations, and she was to have gone. Ralph too had left her, and the child suddenly felt very lonesome and forlorn.

In the midst of her grief there came a slight tap on the door, and before she could answer it, it opened and Ralph himself stood there.

“Virgie,” he called, “are you asleep?”

“No, Ralph,” answered Virginia sliding from the high bed with alacrity. Her sorrow was all gone in the joy of not being forgotten.

“I came up just as soon as they had gone,” said Ralph entering the room and placing the candle of green myrtleberry wax that he carried in a candlestick on the table. “Does your back still hurt?”

“Now much now,” replied the girl, her face lighted up by a smile now that Ralph had come. “Why didn’t you go to the Dandridges’ with them, Ralph?”

“Because it wasn’t right to go off and leave you,” responded the boy. “You had taken the thrashing and you were not to blame any more than Evelyn or I. I wasn’t going to let you stand missing the party all alone too. We’ll have some fun of our own.”

“Does your mother know?”

“Yes; I asked father if I might stay before her, and he said that if I thought that I deserved the punishment too that I might stay.”

“Was Uncle Ralph dreadfully angry about the glass?” asked Virginia in a low tone. “I am afraid to meet him.”

“He was sorry about it,” admitted Ralph, “but he thought that as it was an accident you should not have been punished. Now come on down to the kitchen. Aunt Tillie is going to get you some supper, and then we’ll go down to Mammy Began’s. Don’t you remember that Dinah is going to get married to-night?”

“O sure enough,” cried Virginia almost gaily. “I had forgotten that this was the wedding night. Let’s hurry.”

She slipped her hand into Ralph’s, and laughing gleefully the two ran down-stairs, through the wide hall, into the dining-room and out into the kitchen.

This apartment with its rough hewn timbers darkened by the smoke, its wide hearth with its deep jambs and long crane where all the meals were cooked for the plantation, afforded an interior worthy the brush of a Rembrandt. Large logs of wood four feet long were piled upon the immense andirons of the fireplace. Upon these, when meals were being prepared, would be spread many ovens and kettles, while the large hearth would be covered with huge ash cakes to be baked on the hot bricks.

Aunt Tillie, the presiding genius who held complete sway over this department, much to the terror of the young darkies, gorgeous in red bandanna and spotless apron, greeted them with effusion.

“Jest kum right in, honeys. Aunt Tillie done got a nice cake fer ye. She knows what

her chilluns laikes. Now set down tell I git things fixed."

The children sat down by the hearth while the old woman drew forth her most delicious viands for their delectation. Ralph and Virginia were her favorites, and many were the tidbits saved for them. Having eaten to repletion the two thanked her heartily, and then wended their way to the negro quarters where Mammy Began's cabin was.

The festivities were at their height when the children entered. The bride shone resplendent in an old silken gown of Mrs. Pendleton's, while the groom bore his blushing honors by the help of a cast off suit of the Colonel's, the buckles of which were not more shiny than his ivories.

The ceremony had been performed, and the happy pair were seated in the centre of an admiring group. The boy and girl were received with delight, for the darkies always felt highly honored whenever any of the folks from the great house favored them with their presence. After offering congratulations, Ralph and Virginia were given seats of honor, and they watched the proceedings with interest.

“ Mistah Willum Braxton, Marse Braxton's Willum, will now favoh us with a song,” announced the master of ceremonies, and a tall, black negro stepped forward and sang the following :

“ Onct de Lord he brought to Adam
A 'ooman he name Ebe ;
An' de Lord he say : ‘ She yourn
As long as bof shall lib.’
An' Adam say : ‘ O Massa,
Dat 'ooman am brack an' bad.’
But de Lord he smile fer dat brack 'ooman,
Wuz de onliest one he had.

“ An' he say : ‘ O Adam, lis'en,
Dat 'ooman ain't so brack,
Ef you done laik her colah,
Her cookin' ain't so slack.’
An' Adam frown : ‘ O Massa,
Dat 'ooman am weak an' po'.’
But de Lord he smile laik dat brack 'ooman
Wuz de lubbliest one fer sho'.

“ An' Adam an' Ebe wuz ma'ed,
An' libed in Eden fair
'Til de ole serpent went spyin'
At dat brack 'ooman dere.
Den Adam he say : ‘ O Massa,
Dat 'ooman am a wuthless thing.’
But de Lord he frown fer dat brack 'ooman
Did de wustest trubble bring.

A Colonial Maid

“An’ de Lord he say : ‘O Adam,
Dat ’ooman no wuss dan you ;
You sho’ly should know bettah
Dan to do what you did do.’
An’ Adam say : ‘O Massa,
I’ll nebber be bad ergain.’
But de Lord he frown, an’ shooed dat pair
Way out in de win’ an’ de rain.”

“Ralph,” whispered Virginia, “did you know before that Eve was a black woman?”

“No,” answered the boy controlling his risibles with difficulty. “I never heard that version. I think our education has been neglected. What is that Dinah is saying?”

The refreshments were being passed after the song, and a young darky girl was offering some cake to the bride.

“Will you hab sum cake, Miss Dinah?” she asked.

“No, thankee, miss,” returned Dinah with a toss of her head. “De man habin’ me habin’ bin ribin from sich a hight of nater makes it almost ompossible to disinfloor me.”

“Gracious me!” gasped Ralph as the darkies stared in open mouthed admiration at the bride. “Let’s get out of this, Virgie. I can stand no more.”

Almost convulsed with laughter they fled from the cabin followed by the music of the fiddles and the sound of shuffling feet. The darkies were in for a night of hilarity and fun.

CHAPTER VIII

AN UNEXPECTED ENCOUNTER

"HAVE you heard the news, Virginia?" asked Evelyn in gleeful accents the next morning at breakfast.

"No," replied Virginia, looking up from the cakes; "what is it?"

"They told us at Dandridges' last night that the rebels had been defeated at Harlem Plaines, and that they were so badly routed they were fleeing in every direction. It won't be long now until the traitors will be crying for mercy, and will be glad to accept any terms that the King may offer."

"Is it true?" gasped Virginia, appealing to Mrs. Pendleton. The Colonel and Ralph had already left the table.

"True? Of course it is true," answered the lady irately, "why should Evelyn tell it if it were not so? It was only a question of time in any case before the rebels would be

defeated. How they could have the temerity to stand up before such troops as his Majesty's has always been a mystery to me."

"And all the signers of the Declaration of Independence will be hanged, won't they, mother?"

"Certainly, my dear. It is no more than they expected themselves. Did not one of their own number say, 'that they must all hang together lest they should each hang separately'? Whether separately or together I dare say there will be no question about the hanging. The King is not a man to overlook such an offense. It was an absurd idea to make such a proclamation anyway. If the colonies had had the least show of succeeding, there might have been some reason for it. As matters now stand, it was a very risky measure to take. A few successes made them lose their heads, and they imagined that they could whip the English."

She laughed scornfully, and poured herself another cup of coffee.

"But how did it happen?" asked Virginia, looking at her blankly.

"It was the most natural thing in the

world. After the battle of Long Island there was nothing else to be expected. Washington has been retreating from General Howe for some weeks. It will be but a short time now until the whole thing is settled, and for my part I will be heartily glad. So long as the war lasts one never knows what time the action may be transferred to our own colony. I know the Colonel has been expecting that that would be done for some time. Well, I will welcome the rule of a royal governor again. I can't bear that odious Mr. Henry."

"I hope that he will be hanged if no one else is," cried Evelyn in a disagreeable tone. "I am sure that he deserves it."

"Why, Evelyn!" cried Virginia, bursting into tears. "How can you say such things? The dear kind Governor!" she paused, unable to proceed.

"He won't be 'the dear kind Governor' much longer," commented Evelyn with maliciousness. "I wonder if the next one will be such a friend of yours."

"No," flashed the little American, her cheeks very red, her eyes sparkling angrily through her tears. "Not if he comes from

the King. I won't be friends with any governor who isn't a patriot. I want one who represents the people. Governor Henry says that is a higher power than the King's."

"There! stop your quarreling, children," commanded Mrs. Pendleton. "Really, you are very provoking, Virginia. One can't say a thing about the war without you flare up. I tremble to think of your future if you do not learn to control that temper. Evelyn, perform on the harpsichord for half an hour. Your father will bring guests home from the hunt, and 'twill be more than likely that you will be asked to sing. I wish you to be in good voice. Virginia, your embroidery hath been neglected of late. See to it that you are not idle."

Evelyn went into the library to practice while Virginia, procuring her embroidery, found a place under the trees and set to work industriously. Swiftly the maiden plied her needle and the flowers and vines that entwined the verse on the sampler grew amazingly under her deft fingers.

The blue Virginia haze of the soft autumn morning gave place to the broad light of the

sunshine as the majestic orb of day mounted high in the heavens. Faintly from the far off distance came the cries of the hunters as they urged on the dogs after a fox. The blowing of the horns, the baying of the hounds showed that riders and dogs were in hot pursuit of the animal.

The sounds filled her with a sudden desire. Why not go out to meet the hunters and ride back with them? She and Evelyn had often done it, and Uncle Ralph was pleased when they did. She had not seen him since the mirror had been broken. Why not ride out to meet him, and tell him how sorry she was that it happened? Dropping her work she ran to the stables, and, ordering a horse to be made ready, was soon cantering down the road.

The hunters were returning in gay good humor. The sport had been exciting, and the fresh air of the pines had had an exhilarating effect upon their spirits. Colonel Pendleton rode a little in the rear of the party, and the girl went at once to his side.

"Oh, Uncle Ralph, I am so glad that you have the brush," she cried as she perceived that he carried the trophy of the chase.

"Yes, the Colonel is always in luck," laughed one of the scarlet coated hunters. "I fear that you would not have been so delighted, my little maid, had it been one of us."

"No," answered Virginia shyly but truthfully. "I like Uncle Ralph to win in everything."

"In everything, my dear?" remarked Colonel Pendleton looking at her significantly. "If that be true, Virginia, then I have your well wishes for the success of my side in the war."

"N-no," uttered the girl, her eyes fixed on his with a reproachful expression. "I shouldn't wish for any harm to come to you, Uncle Ralph, but I do want the colonies to win."

"Ha! ha!" laughed the Colonel. "I thought you were not sincere." Then a flash of annoyance stirred him as he noted her attire, and he added, "Gentlemen, I must introduce to you the only rebel in my household. Miss Virginia Pendleton who must needs discard her proper dress for the sake of what she considers her duty to the colonies."

For one instant the girl drooped in an agony of shame as the eyes of all were turned upon her. Then with dignity she lifted her head, and courtesying with the grace of an injured queen, replied :

“ ’Tis but a small thing to forego the wearing of fine apparel for one’s country when our brothers in the field are giving their lives for her. But ’tis the only thing a girl can do to show her sympathy.”

No grown woman could have administered a better rebuke, and a sudden pride leaped into the Colonel’s eyes at her bearing.

“ Zounds ! who would have thought that ’twas in the little minx ! ” was his mental exclamation. “ That proud air well becomes her. I doubt if even Evelyn could have borne herself so well.”

So it was with softened manner that he laid his hand on the bridle of her horse and drew her closer to him while he said :

“ But barring being a rebel which, please God, will soon trouble none of us, she is a good little girl.”

A murmur of approbation went up from the men at these words, for all had noticed

the girl's embarrassment. Now they crowded about her overwhelming her with words of praise.

"Egad, Colonel!" cried one. "I would not care what her convictions were, and I had so sweet a niece! For my part I like none of your namby pamby sort who agree with everything one says. Piquancy improves any sauce."

"My child, I admire your courage," remarked a white-haired gentleman patting her hand gently. "It should shame many of the older ones who hesitate to declare themselves. Are you not afraid that such a patriot will corrupt other members of your family, Colonel?"

"No," answered the Colonel proudly. "The Pendletons are too loyal to the King to permit anything to touch their fealty. But do not compliment the child any longer, gentlemen, I pray you. It will make her vain as a peacock."

"She seems too sensible for aught of praise to spoil her," said the white-haired man approvingly.

The girl's cheeks were red as the Virginia

holly at the commendation bestowed upon her. She shrank closer to her uncle's side, and slipped her little fingers into his.

"Uncle Ralph," she said in a low tone as they proceeded toward the hall, "I came out to tell you how sorry I am that the pier glass was broken. I feel so bad about it, and I will try to be very careful in the future."

"Tut, tut, child! 'Twas an accident that might have happened with any of us. Think no more of it."

"Thank you, uncle. How good you are to me," returned the girl, pressing his hand tenderly. It had been long since he had looked at her with so much kindness.

They rode along at a brisk pace. Presently the beat of a drum was heard, and there issued from the woods a queer looking band. Lads ranging all the way from fifteen year old boys to urchins of nine and ten were marching in military array down the road. Over their shoulders were old flintlock muskets—some broken and defaced,—broom handles, sticks and rusty swords; in short, any manner of weapon that could be made to do duty for a musket. On their hats were cock-

ades of bluff and blue, the Continental colors.

A shout of laughter went up from the hunters as the motley regiment came toward them. The Colonel joined in heartily when all at once his merriment ceased, and his face grew black as a thunder-cloud as he saw, at the head of the approaching company, his own son—Ralph Pendleton.

The boy did not see his father, and, wishing to show the training of his men and to do honor to the hunting party, many of whom he knew, gave the command in a ringing voice :

“Present arms !”

The boys obeyed with military precision.

“What company is this ?” inquired one of the gentlemen laughingly.

At this moment the lad caught sight of his father, and his face went white to the lips. He hesitated for the space of a second and then, saluting, replied clearly,

“The fifteenth infantry of the Continental Army, sir. Commanders, Captain Joe Daniel and Lieutenant Ralph Pendleton.”

The Colonel’s boast of the fidelity of his family to the King had been so recent that a

sort of electric thrill went through the group at the reply. There was no laughter, for all felt that it was not a time for jest, and the hunters started on in silence, followed by the voice of Ralph as he commanded :

“Shoulder arms! Forward, march!”

Virginia dared not look at her uncle. She had not known of Ralph's connection with the patriot boys although she was cognizant of the fact that he was inclining more and more to the side of the colonies. Now the joy in the knowledge that he had openly espoused the cause was tempered by the thought of what the consequences might be to him. Colonel Pendleton showed no sign of his displeasure, and, when the hall was reached, courteously insisted that the party should remain for dinner. The invitation was accepted, and host and guests disappeared within the hospitable walls of the mansion.

Virginia, resigning her horse to the charge of a negro, went back to the tree where she had been sewing, and took up her embroidery. Presently Ralph came in from his drilling. His manner was very dejected, but his face brightened when he saw Virginia.

“Let’s go down to the grove,” he said, coming over to her. “I want to talk with you.”

In silence they walked to their favorite grove, and then the boy spoke :

“Wasn’t it awful, Virgie?” he said.

Virginia nodded sympathetically.

“I did not know that father was there,” went on Ralph. “When I saw him I felt as if I would like to sink into the ground. Then I knew that he must know some time, and I hate a sneak anyway, so I spoke up as bold as brass. But I was scared. And did you see his face? It was dreadful! Well! I’ll take any punishment that he chooses to inflict without a word. It gives me a sore pang to offend him. Oh, Virgie, if he’d only let me go into the army!”

“What do you suppose that he will do?” asked Virginia. “I fear that he is very angry, Ralph. He did not speak for a long time, and then he went on talking to the men as if nothing had happened. But he looked so grave and stern that I was afraid to say a word.”

“I don’t know what he’ll do,” answered

Ralph. "If a cudgeling will relieve his feelings I will be glad to take it. I don't know of anything else to be done, do you?"

"Look!" was the girl's answer.

And there, with her sails fluttering in the breeze and her pennants flying, came the packet, Lucinda.

CHAPTER IX

AS MIGHT HAVE BEEN EXPECTED

RALPH turned pale as he saw the vessel rounding to the wharf.

“Virgie,” he groaned, “that is what father will do. He will send me back to England. He hasn’t said anything about it lately, and I had forgotten it. What will I do? I don’t want to go! I don’t want to go!”

“Maybe if you will beg real hard, he won’t send you,” comforted Virginia. She was pale also, for she felt certain that nothing would move Colonel Pendleton from carrying out his determination to send Ralph away.

“It would be no use to beg,” said Ralph, “even if I could do it. No; I’ll just have to go, but I’d almost rather die than leave America now. Surely he won’t have the heart to do it when I tell him how I feel. I just can’t go.”

“Let’s go and get some dinner,” suggested Virginia, wise beyond her years in offering this

panacea for masculine troubles. "Maybe we can think of something to do then. I heard Squire Daniel say once that no one ought to decide anything on an empty stomach."

"All right; let's go," said Ralph gloomily. "Let's do anything rather than stay here and watch that packet."

So the two children went slowly back to the house, reaching the front portico just as the horn sounded for dinner. In the talk at the table they were unnoticed for which Ralph was thankful. He knew that a reckoning must follow the departure of the guests, and the boy was nerving himself to meet it. At the close of the meal, a great bowl of sangaree was placed before the Colonel's plate, and from it the glasses of all were filled.

"Gentlemen," said the host rising, "I give the toast which all loyal Virginians delight to drink: His Majesty, King George the third."

A number of the guests bowed and raised their glasses to their lips, but some of them left their tumblers untouched. Ralph felt his father's eye upon him. He grew pale, but bravely lifting his head met the glance without flinching. For one second the Colonel

gazed upon his son as if he would read his very soul. Then he turned to his guests with graciousness :

“ Since my toast is not to your liking, gentlemen, let those who will join me in it ; then perhaps we can find another upon which all shall agree.”

There was a murmur of assent, and the toast was drunk. Mrs. Pendleton then arose, and, courtesying deeply, retired with the children. Ralph and Virginia slipped away, and again went to the grove, drawn thither by some sort of a fascination. They watched the sailors busily unloading numerous casks, barrels, and boxes containing the various articles which the Tory Virginians still continued to import from England.

“ Ralph,” said Virginia presently, “ I did not know that you had become a patriot until to-day. Tell me how it came about.”

“ It seems as though I had always been one now that the struggle is over,” answered Ralph. “ And you may be sure that I did not become one without pain, for 'tis a fearful thing for a Pendleton to be disloyal. But 'tis a worse one to submit to oppression and injus-

tice even though they be from the King. The patriots are right. I feel it. I know it. After hearing the Declaration of Independence, and talking with Mr. Henry, I thought the matter over for myself. I listened to what the older people said every chance I had. To the King's men as well as the patriots. I came to the conclusion that the colonies were right."

Virginia uttered an exclamation of delight, then quickly repressed it with a sigh.

"But your father, Ralph."

"Oh, it's all up with me now," returned Ralph. "I've added insult to injury by refusing to drink the King's health. He'll send me back to England, and I'll have to stay there, I suppose, until the whole thing is decided one way or the other."

Thus the hours passed in grave conversation, the boy awaiting the summons that would come with the departing guests. At length Martha came to tell him that his father wished to see him in the library. Virginia pulled down his tall head as he rose to go, and kissed him.

"I am so sorry for you, Ralph," she said.

"Be brave. After all you are in the right. America is your country."

"Yes; and you are a dear little thing," answered Ralph, returning the caress. "I know that you'll stand by me, Virgie, whatever the others may do. Wait here for me."

It seemed a long time to Virginia before he returned, but in reality it was less than an hour. She ran to him quickly when she saw him approaching.

"What did Uncle Ralph do?" she cried. "Was he very angry? Do you have to go back to England?"

"Angry doesn't express it," answered the boy throwing himself down on the grass. "He said that he would rather a son of his would be dead than to have him false to the King. I tried to explain, to let him know how I felt; that I was not so base as he thought, but he told me sternly that I did not know what I was talking about. And, Virgie," the boy's voice was low, "the worst of it is, that he blames you with it all."

"Blames me?" exclaimed Virginia in dismay.

"Yes; he thinks that if you had not in-

sisted upon wearing that garb, and doing other things that the patriots do, that I would not have changed. I fear that it will go hard with you while I am away."

"Must you really go, Ralph?"

"Yes; I must, Virgie. I sail in the *Lucinda* to-morrow." The boy spoke with despairing calmness. "I am afraid that there is no help for it. When I told father that I wanted to stay while the country was in a state of war, he said that a lad that was blown about like a weather-cock was better off out of her. I told him that it was the Declaration of Independence and the talk with Mr. Henry that set me to thinking. He declared the Declaration was rubbish, and Patrick Henry a rebel whose sole stock in trade was speech making. I have wondered why he did not say anything to me about cheering that day at Richmond town. He spoke of it to-day, and said that he had regarded it as a mere boyish blunder, but by my actions to-day I had mortified and exasperated him beyond endurance. That I was incapable of judging for myself, and must be sent out of harm's way."

“Did he cane you, Ralph?”

“No; I wish he had. It would have relieved us both. He feels badly, Virgie, and so do I. I am sorry to grieve him so.” There was a suspicious quiver about the lad’s lips but he suppressed it quickly. “All the time I am away I will be thinking how he looked. I wish I could see Mr. Henry. If there was more time I should go to him, but there is no use thinking about it now. Let’s go down to the quarters, and see Mammy Began, and the rest of the darkies. I want to go all over the plantation. It will be my last chance.”

The remainder of the day passed gloomily enough to the household. The Colonel himself superintended the preparations for Ralph’s sailing. Mrs. Pendleton had taken to her bed, overcome by the news of her son’s conduct, and the necessity for his departure. Evelyn would not speak to Virginia, and her uncle would not notice her. Chilled by this treatment the child crept up to her own chamber, and went to bed supperless.

The hours passed. Darkness descended, and the noise of the servants died away. After awhile the silence that betokened that

all had gone to rest settled upon the mansion. Still the girl could not sleep. A sense of impending evil, of something about to happen, weighed upon her. Unable to bear the oppressive feeling she arose from her bed, and went to the window hoping that the fresh air would soothe her disquietude.

As she approached the lattice a slight noise as of something thrown against it startled her. She stood still trembling. Presently the sound was repeated, and overcoming her alarm she looked out. Nothing was to be seen outside, and Virginia ventured to raise the sash, and to lean out.

“Virgie,” came in a low tone from below.

“Is that you, Ralph?” she asked, much relieved.

“Yes; don’t speak so loud. Dress yourself, and come down for a minute. I want to see you.”

Virginia lowered the window and dressed herself quickly, wondering why Ralph did not come to her door instead of asking her to come down. She was soon ready, and stole softly down the stairs, through the great hall,

and was soon on the portico where she was joined by Ralph.

“Let’s get away from the house,” whispered the boy, drawing her out among the trees. “I called you to tell you good-bye, Virgie.”

“Good-bye?” gasped Virginia. “Oh, Ralph, I thought that you were not to leave until to-morrow.”

“The Lucinda doesn’t,” said Ralph grimly, “but I am not going in her.”

“What are you about to do?” cried she in alarm. “Ralph, you are not running away?”

“Yes; I am,” answered the lad doggedly. “I won’t stand being sent to England whether I want to go or not. I am going to General Washington to offer him my services.”

“Ralph, you mustn’t do that! Indeed you must not. Why you might be killed, and how would your father feel then?”

“It wouldn’t be a bit worse to be killed on the American side than it would on the British,” declared Ralph. “A man has to take his chances. Father would have had me to enter the King’s army in a few years at most, and he knows the risks. It is only taking time by the forelock. I feel that the patriots

need my services, and they shall have them," he concluded pompously.

Virginia threw her arms about his neck sobbing convulsively.

"I can't let you go, Ralph. Don't go! Please don't go!"

"Why, Virgie! Haven't you been saying what you would do if you were a boy? And I am acting just as you said you would. It is right for me to go, and you would too; wouldn't you?"

"I don't know," answered she in heart-broken tones. "I am thinking of Uncle Ralph."

"Now, Virgie, be sensible. I thought you would encourage me. I've gone over the whole affair, and decided that this is the thing to do. I have written a long letter to father on the subject, explaining just how I felt. As a Pendleton I must live up to my principles. I have taken my pony, my fife, and a few things necessary for the journey. But I must hasten. Kiss me good-bye, Virgie."

"O, Ralph, Ralph," sobbed the girl clinging to him.

"There, there! You'll be mighty proud of me if I come back with shoulder straps," and he stroked her hair caressingly, and kissed her several times. Then gently unclasping her arms from about his neck he went slowly to the tree where his pony was tied. Virginia followed him, her tears flowing fast.

"Good-bye, Virgie. You have been a good little playmate, and I'll never forget you."

"And I never will you either, Ralph. How can I do without you? Nobody is so kind and good as you are!"

"Good-bye," said Ralph, hastily, something choking in his throat. "Go back into the house, Virgie. I don't like to go while you stay out here."

Seeing that expostulation was useless Virginia returned to the house. The boy watched her until the door closed after her, then mounted his pony, and rode off into the night.

CHAPTER X

THE CONSEQUENCES

VIRGINIA spent a sleepless night, and weary and worn, made her appearance at the breakfast table with a heavy heart. Colonel Pendleton and Evelyn were already seated. Mrs. Pendleton was not able to come down, and the meal was eaten in silence which was broken finally by the Colonel.

“Tell Phil to come here,” was his command; Phil, who was Ralph’s special attendant, entered the apartment speedily. “Has Master Ralph awakened yet?”

The darky looked at him with wide open eyes full of amazement.

“Why, suh? Ain’t he gone, suh?”

“Gone? what do you mean?” asked the Colonel whirling upon him so suddenly that the negro cowed before him.

“I—I dunno, suh, only he ain’t up dar, suh,” was his stammering answer.

The Colonel was on his feet instantly, and without another word ran up to his son's chamber. The bed had not been slept in, and the room was in perfect order. "He must have stayed somewhere else," he muttered, but a hurried investigation of the other chambers showed that he had not done so. With a sense of growing uneasiness the father reëntered his son's chamber and made a careful examination of it. At length his eye was caught by the flutter of a paper which lay just under the bed where it had evidently been blown by a puff of wind. Catching it up he found that it was a letter addressed to himself. He broke the seal eagerly, and gave it a hasty glance. A malediction broke from his lips and he ran down the steps and into the dining-room as if he were out of his senses.

"Speak," he cried, clutching Virginia by the shoulder. "Did you know that Ralph had run away?"

"Yes, sir," gasped the girl growing very pale and trembling beneath his touch.

"Where has he gone?"

"He said he was going to General Washington."

"The idiot!" ejaculated the father. "When did he go?"

"Last night," answered Virginia faintly. She was very much frightened for she had never seen the Colonel so angry.

"And you did not come to me and tell me!" cried the Colonel pale with wrath. "You ungrateful girl! I have clothed you, and fed you from an infant, and as a return for my kindness you aid and abet my son in disobedience. Had it not been for your childish and unreasoning folly this would not have happened. Phil," to the darky who had stood awaiting his pleasure in terrorized silence, "do you know anything of this?"

"Nuffin', Massa Kuhnel. I 'clare to goodness I doesn't," he answered, his teeth chattering. "I jest went up wid de hot wate' laik I does ebber mornin', suh, and he wuzn't dere. Den I went down to de stable, and dey tells me down dere, suh, dat Massa Ralph's pony done gone too, suh. An' dat's all I knows, suh. I 'clare it is."

"Have Ajax saddled for me instantly," commanded the Colonel in peremptory tones.

“If he isn’t at the door in five minutes I’ll make you suffer for it severely! Do you hear?”

“Yes, suh;” and Phil hurried from the room.

“Father,” broke in Evelyn as he started through the door, “what has occurred? Has Ralph run away?”

“Read this, and see for yourself.” The father tossed Ralph’s epistle to her. “As for you,” turning to Virginia, “if you have not removed that unseemly attire by the time I return, and clothed yourself in garments befitting my household, I will have it torn from you. Idiot that I was to sanction it in the first place. But I knew not what perversity and naughtiness of heart I was abetting. Evelyn, will you see Captain Jack and tell him of this affair? Ask him to hold the Lucinda until my return. I will follow after that misguided boy and bring him home.”

His horse having been brought around, he mounted it and rode off at a furious speed.

“May I read the letter, Evelyn?” asked Virginia as the two were left alone.

"Yes," answered Evelyn ungraciously after a moment's hesitation. "But you must tell me all that Ralph said when he left."

"I will do so gladly." Virginia proceeded to give an account of the matter.

"There!" and Evelyn handed her the missive, "read it quickly. I will take it to mother and then go to Captain Jack. And I hope that this will teach you to be a more obedient child, Virginia. I will never forgive you if my brother is not found. Mother always said that father would regret bringing you here. That you would make trouble, and now you have without doubt. It doesn't pay to take in people about whom one knows nothing."

"Evelyn," said Virginia, her face white, "I think you are very unkind to taunt me in such manner. Uncle Ralph does know who my mother was. He told me so, but she did not wish me to bear her name for some reason, and that is why I wear Uncle Ralph's."

"And why didn't she want you to bear her name?" sneered Evelyn. "There must have been something wrong with it or she wouldn't be ashamed of it. I know that father is sorry

now that he ever took you to raise. He will never speak to you again, I feel sure. And I just hate you."

"Oh, Evelyn, don't say that," cried Virginia, bursting into tears.

"Well, I do. And I wouldn't be in your shoes for a good deal when mother hears of this," said Evelyn maliciously. "Hurry up with that letter so that I can take it to her."

Choking back her sobs, Virginia took up the letter and read it. It was written in a stiff, schoolboy hand, and in the formal, set phraseology of that day. It was such an epistle that under ordinary circumstances the Colonel would have laughed heartily at its pomposity. Now it touched him too deeply that his son should have set his authority at defiance. It ran as follows :

"FORREST HALL, Sept. 20th, 1776.

"HONORED AND RESPECTED PARENT :—

"It is with regret that I beg to inform you of my intention to join the Continental Army. It hath caused me much grief to disappoint your expectations, but, sir, in times such as these a man often finds that his duty conflicts with his affections.

“ After giving the subject due consideration I have become convinced that the colonies are right in their struggle against his Majesty, King George the third of England. Having come to such decision it therefore becomes my bounden duty to declare said conviction by devoting myself to the interests of my country. For this reason I drilled a regiment. The performance of which duty you had the pleasure of witnessing yesterday.

“ After long deliberation over the interview betwixt you and myself concerning that happening, it devolved upon my conscience the painful necessity of either renouncing my country in her hour of peril, or piercing with disappointment the heart of that kind parent who hath ever bestowed upon me the utmost affection.

“ Sir, I have chosen the latter. I trust by the honors which I hope to gain in the conflict to make amends for my seeming disobedience. Believing, sir, that after due reflection you will come to look upon my act with forgiveness, knowing that every man must be a law unto himself in such matters, I am, my dear and honored father,

“ Ever your humble and obliged son,

“ RALPH PENDLETON.

“ P. S.—Tell mother and Evelyn not to worry. I won't hurt Carter if I meet him. It

will be a good thing to have a son on each side if the armies should invade Virginia.

“ R. P.”

Virginia handed the letter back without a word of comment. Her heart was too sore for utterance. Evelyn received it also in silence and left the room. Virginia too went from the apartment and prepared to obey the Colonel's injunction about her clothes.

“ If my heart is right it ought not to make much difference,” she thought as she removed the coarse garments with many tears. “ I dare not disobey Uncle Ralph now. Perhaps later he will let me wear them again. Perhaps too he will tell me my mother's name. Why doesn't he? Oh, if he'd only tell me I would be so good! I ought to know it. All the other girls know theirs, and I don't see why it should be different with me. It's my own name.”

With her mind filled with these thoughts she went down-stairs hoping and fearing that the Colonel would soon return with Ralph. The whole house was thrown into confusion. The Colonel away on his search for his son, Mrs. Pendleton prostrated, the management of

affairs fell upon Evelyn's shoulders, and she was hardly equal to the emergency. Sad times indeed seemed to have fallen upon Forrest Hall.

At the close of the day the Colonel came home, silent, weary, and dispirited, only to renew his quest the next day, and the next. It was all to no avail. Finally he became discouraged, and abandoned the search altogether. Then there came a day when the family was summoned into the great hall.

"From this day forth," said Colonel Pendleton, gazing sternly at them, "let no one mention the name of my younger son to me. He hath been disloyal to his King and disobedient to his father. He is no longer a son of mine. Let not one of you on pain of my displeasure ever speak of him to me again. I have but one son—Carter."

The silence that followed this announcement was broken by Virginia who ran to him and dropped at his feet in a passion of tears.

"O, Uncle Ralph! Dear uncle, please do not say such a thing!" she cried in anguish.

"Please ——"

"Out of my sight," thundered the Colonel

with fury. "I loathe the sight of you. Had it not been for your unseemly influence Ralph would still be my son. As it is, I will punish severely the one who mentions him to me. Away, girl, lest I cast you out also."

Virginia crept away, followed by the commiserating looks of the servants.

The winter passed, and the summer came on and in all that time there came no word of the runaway boy.

CHAPTER XI

THE COLONEL IS SURPRISED

THE surrender of Burgoyne had the effect of an elixir upon the country, and the struggle with the English was prosecuted with renewed vigor. Beside the hostile army the colonists had other foes to guard against, and not the least of these were the Tories.

The feeling against the loyalists had become intensely bitter, and it was no longer possible for them to remain in their homes without fear of molestation in communities where they were in a minority. Their houses were searched, their private papers put under the seal of the Committee of Safety, and frequently their persons were subjected to indignities. Everywhere they bore watching, and the most stringent measures were adopted against them by the Assemblies of the different colonies.

Thus matters stood in Virginia. Life was no longer a round of hunts, merrymakings

and dinners that it had formerly been. The loyalists knew and communicated with each other. Visits were exchanged as of yore. A gentleman could always go to the house of another. But the goings and comings of all who were suspected of Tory proclivities were inquired into very closely.

At Forrest Hall this state of affairs was provocative of much complaint from Mrs. Pendleton and Evelyn, and they were obliged to content themselves with such informal affairs as the gathering together of a few ladies and girls where the Continental Congress, the army and the present state of Virginia were discussed and condemned in no measured terms.

Virginia was not taken with them on these occasions. Since Ralph had left home she had been made to feel the bitterness of being a dependent under displeasure. The Colonel showed his aversion to her so openly that she kept out of his sight as much as possible. Mrs. Pendleton had always disliked her, and, encouraged by her husband's example, ignored the girl entirely; while Evelyn lost no opportunity of taunting her with her position and

unknown parentage. It was a dreary time for Virginia. It was not good for her to be left so much to herself, and a sad little droop crept about her mouth, and a serious, melancholy air became habitual to her.

One day the bright October weather tempted her for a walk, and, tying her broad-brimmed hat over her curls, she set forth. Into the woods she wandered, culling bright bits of foliage from the gaily-colored trees that had changed their dress of sober green for the radiant hues of autumn. Tiring of this she found an old moss-covered log, and sitting down upon it, was soon lost in thought. So deeply was she thinking that she was oblivious to all else, and was startled when she heard a deep, musical voice by her side say :

“ Well, my little lass, are you a wood-nymph or a fairy ? ”

Virginia turned quickly, and looked up at the stately gentleman who stood beside her. He was very tall, with a courtly bearing, and his uniform of buff and blue well became his handsome figure. He was so noble in appearance that she gazed at him with some awe

which was quickly dispelled by the sunny smile with which he regarded her.

"Are you a wood-nymph or a fairy?" he repeated.

"I am neither, sir," she said, at last, recovering from her shyness.

"You were so still that I thought that you must be one or the other," he said, smiling down upon her. He must be older than Uncle Ralph, she thought, as she saw that his dark hair which he wore in a queue was streaked with gray.

"Are you a soldier?" she ventured, timidly. "I see you wear the uniform."

"Yes, little one, I am in the army. May I ask which side you are on?"

"I am a patriot," answered Virginia. "I was so glad to hear of General Burgoyne's surrender. It will make General Washington feel better, I know."

"Indeed it will," answered the stranger, smiling again. "My little girl," he said, abruptly, after a pause during which time he had been studying her intently, "I wonder if I could trust you to deliver a message for me?"

"Yes, sir," answered Virginia, steadily re-

turning his look. "I will gladly carry any word that you wish. Must I go far?"

"I think not. It hath been long since I was at Forrest Hall, but methinks it cannot be far from here."

"Forrest Hall!" exclaimed the girl in surprise. "Why! I live there."

"Do you?" The stranger looked at her searchingly. "Then you must be one of Ralph Pendleton's children; yet you do not resemble him o'ermuch. Stay! there is a look. No, it is not Pendleton's. Of whom does the child remind me?" He put his hand to his brow reflectively, a puzzled look in his eyes, and then sighed.

"No, sir; I am not Colonel Pendleton's child," replied Virginia. "I am his——" then she stopped short. She was going to say his niece, but she had become very sensitive on the subject of late, so she wound up lamely: "That is, I live there."

"Then I think that will do nicely," said the stranger, not noticing her hesitation. "I want you to bear to him alone the communication that I am about to make. I may trust you, little one?"

“ Yes, sir.”

“ I know that I can,” he remarked after another keen scrutiny. “ Then tell Ralph Pendleton that he is watched, and that the Committee of Safety purpose searching his premises ere long. Further : that others, less honorable than the Committee, intend using him roughly on the second night from this. He knows the usage accorded to Tories, and will realize what is in store for him. Tell him that though Dudley Brandon is his sworn enemy, yet he would not see him subjected to indignity. Can you remember all this, my little maid ? ”

“ Yes, sir, ” answered Virginia, her face colorless at the thought of what might happen to Uncle Ralph. “ I will run every step of the way to him.”

“ You need not do that, child. My horse is near by. I will carry you to the house. Come with me.”

“ Oh, sir, you do not think that Uncle Ralph will be killed, do you ? ” she asked as he lifted her up before him on the horse.

“ No, no, child ! But there are things which would be worse for a proud man to endure

than death. Are you fond of your Uncle Ralph?"

"I love him very much, and I would love him more, if he would let me," sighed the child, her face growing mournful as she thought of how long it had been since the Colonel had taken the least notice of her. "But Uncle Ralph has Evelyn and he doesn't need me, you know," she concluded plaintively.

"Poor child!" The arm that encircled her waist drew her closer. "And you have no parents that you live at the Hall?"

"No, sir; I wish I had," cried Virginia her eyes filling with tears; "but they are dead. Oh, I get so lonesome without any one to love me! Ralph used to like me before he left, but now there is no one at all."

"Poor little girl!" said the other softly. "How strange it is that children are bereft of the parental love they crave, and parents of their offspring. You wish for parents, child, and I for a little one of my own to love me. I too am alone. There is no one to care for me either."

"Have you no wife?"

"No; and my child died long years ago," was the reply.

"I wish you were my father," said Virginia impulsively, drawn to him by the bond of loneliness they had in common. "It would be easy to love you. You are so gentle and kind."

"Little flatterer!" laughed the other and with sudden tenderness he kissed her forehead. "I wish I were your father in very truth, child. But here we are at the Hall. Do you remember the message?"

Virginia nodded her head emphatically, and then repeated it.

"You have a good memory," declared the stranger in a tone of satisfaction. "Good-bye, little girl! Mayhap we will meet again."

"I hope so," answered the girl gazing at him wistfully. "I am sorry that you have no one to love you, sir. I shall love you and pray for you."

"Dear child, Heaven bless you for those words. I will treasure them in my heart. In all the wide world your pure lips will be the only one to raise a petition for Dudley Brandon. Farewell."

Bowing low he left her, and mindful of her errand the girl ran into the hall.

Colonel Pendleton sat in the drawing-room reading the last number of the Virginia Gazette. Virginia approached him with more assurance than she had felt for weeks.

"Uncle Ralph," she said.

"Well?" and the Colonel looked at her over the paper. "What is it?"

"I was in the woods just now, and a gentleman gave me a message to bring you. He said to tell you that you were being watched, and that the Committee of Safety would search the hall ere long. Further, that other men of a rougher sort had threatened to take you out two nights hence, and treat you as they had other Tories."

The Colonel's paper dropped from his hand, and he uttered an exclamation of wrath.

"Do they dare to think that they can use Ralph Pendleton in that manner?" he shouted, enraged. "I will teach them. The rascals! Let them but lay a hand on me, and there won't be one of them left to tell the tale. Who was it that gave the warning?"

“A gentleman of noble bearing, sir. I do not think he gave his name.”

“Said he aught else? Tell me all. Was there nothing by which I might know him?”

“Let me think,” said Virginia reflectively. “Yes; he said ‘though Dudley Brandon is the sworn enemy of Ralph Pendleton still I would not wish him subjected to indignity.’”

“Dudley Brandon!” The Colonel’s face became ashy pale, and he caught Virginia roughly by the arm. “What did you say to him? Girl, girl, do you not know that that man is your worst enemy? Speak! What passed betwixt you two?”

“Very little, Uncle Ralph,” replied Virginia wincing under his grasp. “Don’t hold me so, please, uncle, and I will tell you all about it.”

“There, there! I didn’t mean to hurt you,” and the Colonel released his hold. “I feared for you. Tell me all. Every word that was said, and quickly.”

Virginia repeated the conversation as well as she could. The Colonel listened with ill suppressed excitement.

"And that is all?" he asked with a sigh of relief.

"All, sir."

"Then, Virginia, listen. It was right to bring the message to me that he sent, but mark me! Shun that man as you would the plague. Dost hear me, girl?"

"But he was so good and kind, Uncle Ralph," cried Virginia in dismay. "He would not do me any harm. I am sure that he would not."

"Dudley Brandon had always a fair face and a taking way with him," cried the Colonel, irately. "Do as I tell you, Virginia. Shun him as you would the plague. That man caused your mother's death, and he is your deadly enemy."

"Why, Uncle Ralph, how can that be? You said that she died of heart trouble on board the ship."

The Colonel stared at her for a moment curiously, and then exclaimed:

"Never mind what I said. It is true that he was the cause of your mother's death. Never speak to him again."

"But, uncle," said Virginia in troubled

tones. "Tell me how it was. I've long wanted to talk on this very subject. Tell me why my mother did not wish me to bear her name. I think yours is all right, dear Uncle Ralph, but I want my own name. My own mother's name. Please do tell me what it was."

"Virginia," said the Colonel sternly, "we have talked this matter over before, and you promised me then that you would ask me no more about it. Is your word nothing to you that you so easily forfeit it?"

"There is so much that I would know," cried the girl, refusing to be put off now that the longed for opportunity had come to question him. "There is so much that it seems to me is right that I should know. Why can't I know as much about my mother as Evelyn does about hers? Who was my father, sir? If he is dead, show me where his body lies that I may weep over it. I must and will know all about myself."

"Must and will are strong words for a child to use," said the Colonel, trying to control his amazement, his passion dying before her vehemence. "You are forgetting your duty to

your elders, Virginia. Now hear this : never from me will you have one word further on this subject. I have ceased to expect gratitude from you, therefore I ask no return for the care I have taken of you. Little did I dream that the soft voiced, sunny haired child that I took to my heart would turn upon me as she has to-day."

"Uncle Ralph, I am not ungrateful when I ask about my father and mother," said Virginia firmly. The neglect of the past year and the taunts of Evelyn were not to be overcome by such reproaches. "I but ask that which all children know concerning their parents. Evelyn says that my mother must have been ashamed of her name if she did not wish me to bear it. I am old enough to know why I may not wear that name, and I will never rest satisfied until I do know it."

"You will never know it from me," reiterated the Colonel more and more astounded at her manner. "Never broach the subject to me again. As for Evelyn, if she has taunted you in any manner, I will put a stop to it. But you must remember that her heart, and all our hearts for that matter, have been sorely

wounded by the part you played in causing the disobedience of her brother. As for this warning, I will caution the household, and put the Hall in a condition to receive visitors. We may have some bloodshed on our account."

"Bloodshed, Ralph? What do you mean?" asked Mrs. Pendleton, entering at this moment.

The lady's face paled as her husband explained to her.

"O Ralph," she cried, clinging to him, "don't let us stay here. Let us go to my own people. Ralph, Ralph, it would kill me if they should tar and feather you."

"They never will, Molly," answered the Colonel, calmly. "No such indignity will ever be offered to me unless it be after I am dead. Ralph Pendleton is no boy, to be taken without a struggle."

"But let us go," sobbed the lady. "You may escape this time, but who knows when they may take you unawares. For my sake, for Evelyn's sake, for the sake of your family name let us leave this place, and go home. Philadelphia is under General Howe's protection, and there we can live in peace."

At last the Colonel was forced to yield to her pleadings, and preparations were quickly made for the journey. The next day the family, accompanied by a few of their servants, started in their chaise for Philadelphia.

CHAPTER XII

AN ADVENTURE OF THE STREETS

ACCUSTOMED to the small towns of Virginia and the life of the plantation, Philadelphia presented a dazzling spectacle to the eyes of our Virginians. It was a compact city of about thirty thousand inhabitants, beautifully situated between the broad Delaware flowing on one side to the sea, and, on the other, the Schuylkill winding through woods of oak and chestnut. The long straight streets which ran evenly intersecting each other like the lines which mark the squares of a checker board, the rows of red brick cottages, and of finer houses with gardens and parks adjoining them, the churches of St. Peter and Christ Church with their tall steeples, the spacious and noble country seats, some of which afterward became famous in history, made a picture that was at once beautiful and inspiring.

Colonel Pendleton was fortunate enough to procure a house on Spruce Street with a considerable garden attached, and here the family was domiciled. With the advent of the English army the Quaker city had laid aside its usual soberness, and plunged into all manner of gayeties.

Dinners, tea drinkings, and gossipings were the order of the hour. The streets were filled with scarlet-coated officers and soldiery on pleasure bent. Places of pleasure were no longer relegated to opprobrium, but put in repair and made fashionable by the British who turned their wits to almost anything from which to derive amusement.

Mrs. Pendleton and Evelyn were delighted with the social life of the city, and entered into it at once. Much to the amusement of her parents Evelyn put her hair up on her head and, aping the airs of the young ladies, became learned in the ways of fashion. But Virginia, though she was nearly half a head taller than her cousin, refused to be enticed by the pleasures, and would have nothing to do with the English who were the enemies of her country. She was shocked at the reckless

levity of the officers. Was this being a soldier? And when stories crept into the city of the hardships and sufferings of the army at Valley Forge, her soul waxed hot with indignation.

So it came about that she was left to her own devices even as she had been at Forrest Hall. As the winter came on she pined in her loneliness.

"Would you like to go with me to the shops, Miss Virginia?" asked the housekeeper, Grace, one afternoon when the girl had moped about the house in a fit of the blues. "It does not seem right that you should be shut up indoors all the time."

"It isn't, Grace," said Virginia, as she found her beaver hat and put on her fur-trimmed pelisse eagerly. "I miss the rides at Forrest Hall, and the walks. There is much to be seen here, but Mrs. Pendleton does not consider it safe for me to wander about the streets alone, and I do not care to go with her and Evelyn."

"Now, miss, I have often wondered about that very thing," said Grace, as they wended their way to the shops. "You are young and

prettier than Miss Evelyn to my way of thinking. Why don't you want to go with them to social gatherings and the like?"

"Because, Grace, I am a patriot," answered Virginia, with sweet seriousness. "It does not seem right to me to waste my time in frivolities when our poor soldiers at Valley Forge are in such distress. And I cannot bear a red coat."

"Indeed, no more can I," returned honest Grace. "But there is no help for it. We have to endure their presence whether we will or not. There are many in the city who do not like it."

"Grace, are you a patriot?"

"Well, if the British should wait for me to help them, they would wait a long time," responded Grace warily. "If that is being a patriot I suppose I am one, though it doesn't always do to be too open about things."

"I am so glad," cried Virginia. "Do you know I have not seen one before since we came? At home there were Polly and Joe and a host of them, and, although I was lonesome there too after Ralph went away, I could talk to them. It wasn't like it is here where

there is no one. You will let me talk to you sometimes, won't you, Grace?"

"To be sure, my dear. Only you must be careful to do it when no one else is around. Madam Pendleton would disapprove of it, I fear."

"I do not think she would care," laughed Virginia. "I have been a rebel so long that she would not know me as anything else. But I wish I could help the poor soldiers."

Their shopping finished, Virginia pleaded to go around by the old State House.

"For I would like to see where the Congress met," she said. "And where the Declaration of Independence was signed. Please, Grace, let us go."

"But the soldiers are quartered there, child. It would not be wise for us to go there," remonstrated Grace.

"I don't believe that they will notice us," declared Virginia. "Who knows when we can come out again together?"

So much against her judgment, Grace yielded to the pretty pleader and they made their way to the State House. The yard was filled with formidable looking cannons, and the

two threaded their way through them without paying attention to the red coats who thronged the place.

The graceful outlines of the State House, full of dignity and with an exquisite sense of fitness and proportion filled the beauty loving soul of the girl with pleasure.

"There lacks but one thing to make it perfect," she said in a low tone to Grace after she had gazed for a long time at the building.

"What is that, my dear?"

"If I could but go into the steeple, and see the bell that rang out the tidings, Grace, I should realize the whole thing. There is an inscription, Squire Daniel said, that was prophetic."

"It is not feasible to climb to the steeple now, little one, but I can tell you what is inscribed on the bell. It says, 'Proclaim Liberty throughout all the Land to all the Inhabitants thereof.'"

"Oh, Grace, I must go up and see it!" exclaimed Virginia, her eyes lighting up at the words.

"You must do what, my little beauty?"

cried a coarse voice near them. "You can do anything you like for a kiss."

"She shan't kiss you without she kisses the rest of us, Jim," said another voice.

"Oh, Grace!" and Virginia clung in terror to the woman as a number of soldiers surrounded them. "Take me home! Don't let them touch me!"

"They shan't if I can help it," cried Grace valiantly, putting her arms around the frightened girl.

"Oh, we don't mind you, old lady," shouted the first speaker, grasping Grace's arm. "We've met worse foes than you."

"It must have been before you came to Philadelphia then," retorted Grace. "What with your laziness, and merrymaking you couldn't meet any foe now."

"Keep a civil tongue in your head, or it will be the worse for you," threatened the soldier angrily. "Let go the girl. I'm going to have a kiss. We are not going to hurt her. A pretty face was made to be kissed."

"I'd rather die than kiss one of you British," exclaimed Virginia, her indignation overcoming her fright, and drawing herself

erect she confronted them with flashing eyes. "You English think you own the town, and can order us about like slaves. Touch me at your peril."

"Why the little rebel has spunk," laughed one in glee. "This is rare sport."

"Come on, boys! Hold the old woman," yelled the leader, making a move toward Grace and her charge.

"What is all this about?" interposed a tall, broad shouldered man in the broad brimmed hat and garb of a Quaker, elbowing his way through the group to Virginia's side. "Me-thinks that such behavior is unseemly for soldiers of the King."

"'Tis only a bit of fun," muttered one. "We want a kiss from the girl and the jade refuses."

"And rightly enough, friend. Such things are not seemly in a maid. She is but little more than a child, why torment her?"

"She should be punished for her wilfulness. She is a rebel. You shan't spoil our sport, sir Quaker."

"That he shall not!" The soldiers, a half

dozen in number, drew near their leader and looked at the Quaker threateningly.

"I think that thee will let her go," was the quiet response.

"Will we? Then come out and fight, old broad brim!"

"'Tis against our tenets, friends. Peace hath ever been the doctrine of the Quaker."

"Then stick to it and do not interfere with others lest that doctrine be broken. Stand aside!"

The Quaker squared himself determinedly before Virginia.

"Friends, it would be better to disperse peaceably."

"What! Be run over by a Quaker?" exclaimed the leader furiously. "Have at him, boys."

There was a rush toward the mild mannered man but the mildness vanished as the onslaught was made, and a wonderful transformation took place. His blue eyes shot forth steely flashes of fire; his nostrils dilated; his form expanded and his arms leaped out with sledge hammer like blows landing where they would do the most execution. Like some

old war horse who, scenting the battle from afar, leaps to the thickest of the fray, so this quiet Quaker was to the amazed revelers. He was everywhere at once, and the soldiers went down before his mighty fists like a set of ninepins. At last those who had not fallen under his blows turned and fled ignominiously.

“‘However the living may contend, surely the dead,’ which in this case means the stunned, ‘may lie peaceably together,’” was the Quaker’s only comment as he turned to Grace. “I think it will be safe now for thee and thy charge to depart. I will accompany thee through the streets to thy dwelling. Thou shouldst not have ventured here alone with the maid, Friend Grace.”

“It was my fault,” said Virginia contritely. “I wished to see the building where the Declaration of Independence was signed. Grace feared to come, but I persuaded her. Oh, sir, I do not know what we would have done had you not come to our assistance. I thank you so much.”

“’Twas nothing, child. I am glad that I was on hand to deliver thee from the Philis-



THE SOLDIERS WENT DOWN BEFORE HIS MIGHTY FISTS

tines. But let us be going ere these rascals regain consciousness, and the others return with an overwhelming force. The matter shall be reported to General Howe, who, however much he may wink at pleasurings, will not countenance such proceedings."

They passed into the street without molestation. Virginia walked along thoughtfully, casting glances at him that were full of questioning.

"Well?" and the Quaker smiled at her reassuringly.

"I thought that you could not fight, sir. You are a Quaker you know."

The shadow of a smile lighted up the man's grave face and a twinkle came into his eye.

"True, my little maid, but there are those of us who also believe in the church militant. There are some who think it right to defend our country from the hand of the oppressor. Hast thou not heard of the Free Quakers?"

"Your uncle speaks of them as the fighting Quakers," reminded the housekeeper.

"Oh, yes; I remember now," cried Virginia who had quite recovered from her fright by this time. "How they did go down before

your fists!" She laughed at the remembrance.

"Truly my might did prevail against them, though it is a grievous thing to expend one's strength in brawling. I like it not, but the times are so parlous that it is oft necessary."

"Then you are a patriot? I am so glad!" Virginia took his hand between her own in delight. "I have been so lonesome, but I will be so no longer now that I know some patriots."

"Where is thy dwelling, child?" asked the Quaker smiling benignly upon her. "Thy people must be stanch for the colonies to imbue thee with such sentiments."

"No," said Grace, who, perceiving the girl's embarrassment answered for her. "They are not patriots, Friend Mayhugh. The maiden's uncle is Colonel Ralph Pendleton late of Virginia, who now resides on Spruce Street in this city. Thou knowest the place. 'Tis next to Friend Wilson's."

"I know; 'tis not far from here. But now we are at mine own house. Enter and refresh yourselves for a time before going further. My wife will like to meet the little maid who

is so strong for her country despite her surroundings. Enter and welcome."

Thus prevailed upon they went into the simple dwelling. Everything was wondrous neat and clean. The floors were scrubbed to spotlessness, and the splint bottomed chairs were polished until they shone. A chest of drawers, a wooden settle, a table on which lay a great Bible completed the furnishings of the apartment into which they were ushered. Everything was very plain but all bore witness to that thrift and industry for which the Quakers were noted. A sweet faced, low voiced woman greeted them cordially, and brought cake and some home-made sweets which she pressed upon them.

"It was an unpleasant experience," she remarked, as her husband gave an account of the matter to her. "Truly the city hath been much scandalized since the coming of the soldiers. It is not wise for women to walk the streets alone. Methinks the General would not approve this if he but knew it."

"He will know it soon," said the Quaker sternly. "I shall see him myself on the morrow."

“Yes; yet will it be wise, Jonas, to bring thyself to his notice? Thee knows that thy work is such ——” She paused in some confusion.

“Fear naught, wife. Friend Grace is for the cause, and the little maid is a strong patriot though she does dwell with Tory relations. I’ll warrant she can keep a discreet tongue in her head.”

“Indeed I can,” said Virginia, rising. “But we must go now, sir. I thank you again, Mr. ——”

“Call me Friend Mayhugh, child. Quakers like not handles to their names.”

“Then, Friend Mayhugh, I thank you again for your kindness, and your wife for her entertainment.”

“Thou art welcome. Perhaps it would relieve the tedium of thy loneliness to give us an occasional visit. Thee might hear some news from our army.”

“Oh,” cried Virginia delightedly. “May I? I should like to come, I know that I shall like you both. You have been so kind.”

Martha Mayhugh smiled at the girl’s impulsiveness.

“Then come whenever it shall please thee,” she said heartily. “We shall like you too, I foresee.”

“I will,” responded Virginia. Now good-bye.”

“Good-day to thee,” responded the Quaker and his wife jointly. Then Grace and Virginia hastened home.

CHAPTER XIII

A RASH RESOLVE

As the time passed by a great friendship sprang up between Virginia and the Mayhughs. The worthy couple became very fond of the girl with her bright ways, and Virginia, no longer pining for Forrest Hall and Polly and Joe, returned their affection with fervor. The Pendletons, after a few comments upon her choice of friends, paid no further attention to the matter. Beyond insisting that Virginia must always be in her place at the table, Mrs. Pendleton cared little how she spent her time. Even her compliance with this rule would not have been required but for the fact that Colonel Pendleton might make inquiries, and this his wife desired to avoid as she did not wish him to know how the girl was neglected.

The cottage being but a short distance from the Colonel's residence, Virginia went there every day, and grew happy and light-hearted

as she helped Martha Mayhugh in her household tasks, or talked the state of the colonies over with Jonas. Her stanch patriotism amused as well as pleased the good Quaker, and he soon found himself confiding things to her that were against his wife's judgment.

"Jonas, Jonas," she chided when Jonas Mayhugh imparted to Virginia the information that he was the medium by which supplies and money were conveyed to the army at Valley Forge from the people in the city. "Thee forgets that the girl is young. It is not the part of wisdom to intrust the keeping of so great a matter to youth."

"Tut, wife! Though Virginia is young yet she hath discretion beyond her years, and nothing would induce her to betray me."

"Nothing ever would," said Virginia earnestly. "I have thought for some time, Friend Martha, that he was engaged upon such business, for how else could he know so much concerning the army? But fear naught! Though it were to save my life I would not betray him."

"See, Martha!" said Jonas triumphantly. "The child's whole heart is in the cause."

"'Tis not that I doubt thee, Virginia," said Martha with a troubled look, "but I would not wish harm to come to thee. I know that thou art discreet, still some unadvised word, or look might betray thee. 'Twere better that thou didst not have the knowledge."

Virginia went to her and kissed her.

"I will be careful, Friend Martha. Make your mind easy. At home I but talk of the cake we make, and the drink we brew. Never a word of the army crosses my lips. A few days since General Howe dined with Uncle Ralph, and, when Evelyn told him that my friends were among the Quakers, he called me to him and said: 'What think the Quakers of the war? Do they talk much concerning it among themselves?'"

"What saidst thou?" asked Martha quickly, and Jonas looked a little startled.

"I said, 'They are people who prefer peace, sir, and desire nothing so much as to be left to enjoy it.' He laughed and said, 'Yes; peace to make money. The Quakers condemn war because it interferes with their gain.' Then he turned away."

"Thee answered wisely," approved Martha.

“Still it is not easy to avert suspicion should it once be directed against us. Thee must be careful, Jonas.”

A few days after this conversation Virginia went as usual to the cottage. Martha received her cordially, but the girl saw that she was in great distress.

“What has happened, Martha?” asked Virginia in quick apprehension, “has harm befallen Jonas?”

“Yes; but not of the nature of which thou art thinking, child. He hath been taken with the fever. He hath complained much lately, but would not take of the simples I fixed for him. To-day he was preparing to go to the camp when he was stricken down. His horse stands ready in the stable for the trip. But we must not complain! The Lord’s way is not our way.”

“I will go in with you to see him,” said the girl, as Martha finished the posset she was making and started for the chamber in which Jonas lay. “I am so sorry that he is ill.”

“’Tis not the illness that worries me, child,” groaned Jonas as they came to his bedside.

“ ’Tis those poor fellows at Valley Forge. Their needs weigh heavily upon me. Word came yesterday that they had not tasted meat for more than a week. Thinly clad, starving, poorly housed, how can they fight our battles for us ? ”

“ Why does not General Washington appeal to the people ? ” asked Virginia.

“ He hath, child. Through Congress, and by other means. Yet he must observe caution. Should the British learn of the condition of the army, they would force him to battle which he could not stand just now, and that would be the end of all our hopes. For this reason the country at large hath not been permitted to know in what sore straits the soldiers are. Toryism is rampant in the surrounding country else the General might obtain supplies from the farmers. They will not sell to him except for English gold, and refuse the Continental money with scorn. Quite an amount of gold has been collected, and to-day I was to take it thither. The horse stands bridled and saddled, but alack ! here am I stricken down with the fever.”

“ Is there no one else who could take it ? ”

queried Virginia, stirred to the depths of her soul by this state of affairs. "Surely, Friend Jonas, there is some one."

"There is Samuel Farley," replied Jonas. "He would take it, but he lives two miles beyond the city, and who would carry him word?"

"Oh, I will. Gladly, gladly!" cried Virginia, starting up eagerly. "Let me go at once."

"Child, child, thee must not think of such a thing," exclaimed Martha in dismay. "See, Jonas, what ideas thee has put into the maiden's head."

"I am not sure but that it is a good idea," returned Jonas after his surprise was over. "Canst thou ride, little one?"

"I can ride any horse," said Virginia with some pride. "Ralph used to say that I was the best rider for a girl that he ever saw. Neither Polly nor Evelyn, nor any of the girls could beat me. I will take the message to Samuel Farley. 'Twill be a fine ride."

"Nay; but thou art much too pretty to go alone," expostulated Martha, gazing at the shining eyes and red cheeks of the girl.

"'Twould never do! The soldiers might annoy thee again, and Jonas would not be near to protect thee. Give o'er the notion, child. I will never consent."

"Thee must," said Virginia, coaxingly adopting the quaint speech of the Quakers with such effect that Martha's eyes grew soft and tender. "Could I not bundle up in some fashion that would hide my face? Let me dress as an old woman. They would not bother me then. Please, Martha! I can't fight, and I may never have another chance to help my country."

"'Tis not a bad thought." Martha looked at her thoughtfully. "If thee would not talk, it might be managed. Let me see."

She took one of her dresses from a cupboard, and from a chest a bonnet and mantle. Then padding the girl's slender figure until it was unsightly in its plumpness, she arrayed her in the garments, putting, last of all, a mask over her face used generally as a protection from the sun but sometimes as a covering for the face in a strong wind.

Virginia laughed gleefully as she gazed at her reflection in the little looking-glass.

"'Twill be sport," she cried. "Nobody will dream that I am other than a Quakeress going for —— What am I going after, Martha?"

"Flour, child. I have a pass from the General for that very purpose, and should have gone for some to-day but that Jonas was taken sick. He hath one too, but it is for other use than mine, and it is best for thee to use mine. Thee can take the sack, and leave it at the mill to be filled. On thy return from Samuel Farley's thou canst stop for it. Then there will be no untruth told."

"Where is the gold, Friend Jonas?" asked Virginia, going to the bedside of the sick man while Martha went out to bring around the horse.

"'Tis stitched in the saddle blankets, little one," answered Jonas, a smile flitting over his flushed face at her appearance. "Martha quilted it so. None would ever suspect its whereabouts. Tell Friend Farley to give the blankets to the General, and to tell him that more will be forthcoming soon. God bless thee, child. 'Tis a brave deed thou art doing."

"My mind misgives me, Virginia, to see

thee go," said Martha, entering at this moment. "I doubt that we are doing right to let thee, and I will not be easy until thy return. Child, thee must be careful."

"I will," returned Virginia, embracing her. "An hour ought to be long enough for the trip. I will be back before you scarcely know that I am gone."

"Remember, Samuel Farley lives in the second house beyond the mill," enjoined Martha. "Speak little! When the guard asks thee for thy pass, show it to him without words if it be possible. Above all, ride slowly because thou art an old woman, and age delights not in swift motion. God bless and guard thee, child."

She kissed her fervently, and Virginia looked up in surprise for the Quakers were not given to caresses.

"Good-bye," said the girl softly. "Do not worry, Martha. I will be back soon. Good-bye, Friend Jonas."

"Good-bye, little one. Thee will get through all right, I know."

Mounting the horse, a good stout bay, Virginia ambled through the streets to the out-

skirts of the city where the British guard was posted. Her appearance was not prepossessing. She looked like a little fat woman going to mill, her empty sack lying conspicuously on the saddle in front of her. Merely glancing at the pass which she tendered him, the guard motioned her to go on. The mill was soon reached, and leaving the bag to be filled with flour, Virginia proceeded more rapidly to Samuel Farley's.

The farmhouse was a large, commodious looking one, but its aspect struck a chill to the girl's heart. No one was stirring about. The blinds were drawn and the whole appearance of the dwelling was one of desolation. Dismounting, she tied her horse, and approached the building. There was no answer to her first rap, so she used the knocker vigorously. Presently a tall, thin woman whose eyes were red with weeping came to the door.

"I give you good-day, madam," said the girl politely. "Is Samuel Farley within?"

"No," replied the woman, and the tears gushed from her eyes. "God knows when he will be again. He was arrested by the order of General Howe this morning in the city.

The news hath been brought me but a short time since."

"Arrested?" Virginia leaned against the door frame, her courage failing. Was some malicious fate pursuing the Continental army that this should have happened at this time?

"Come in," said the woman, perceiving her emotion. "Why doth the intelligence affect thee so much?"

"Because," said Virginia, unable to restrain her tears, "Jonas Mayhugh sent me to him with a message upon which much depends. He was too ill to come himself. Now I do not know what to do."

"Was it concerning supplies for Valley Forge?" asked the woman who was Samuel Farley's wife. "He hath often gone with Jonas, and was arrested on suspicion of that very thing."

"What shall I do?" asked Virginia again. "Is there no one else about here who could go? It is very necessary, madam."

"There is no one. There are but few who can be trusted," sighed the other. "Now every one will have to be more careful, and no one will want to go. Tell Friend Jonas from

me to exercise caution. I know not what will become of Samuel." The tears came to her eyes again. Virginia arose, her own heart full of despair.

"I must go," she said. "There is nothing else to do but to return to Jonas." She started for the door, the woman following her, and, despite her trouble, expressing sympathy for her disappointment.

Virginia reached the door and then stopped overcome by a sudden resolve that flashed into her mind.

"How far is it from here to Valley Forge?" she asked, abruptly.

"'Tis eighteen miles," answered Mrs. Farley. "Surely thee will not attempt the journey? Thy voice is young and thy face unwrinkled, yet thee appears old. 'Twould be too much for thee."

"I am not so old as I seem," returned Virginia, abstractedly. Could she, dare she attempt the journey? She paused in thought and then looked up. "Tell me in which direction the camp lies?"

"Straight up the Schuylkill. If thee shouldst go, thee could not miss it."

“Then I will try it. Thank you, and good-day. I am sorry for your trouble.”

“If General Howe has arrested Samuel Farley,” she mused as she mounted her horse, “who knows but that Jonas will be the next one. Then the poor soldiers would not get anything more. They shall have this gold at least. Get up, Selim! We are not in sight of the guards now.”

And so filled with the resolution to carry what succor she could to the suffering army, Virginia headed her horse in the direction of Valley Forge.

CHAPTER XIV

AT VALLEY FORGE

WITH some trepidation Virginia approached the outpost of the British army encamped on the east bank of the Schuylkill. If she could succeed in passing these lines she believed that there would be no further difficulty.

The rules were particularly stringent against carrying supplies outside, but the farmers were encouraged to bring their produce into the city. In consequence of this as there were few friends of the patriots within ten miles of the city there was much passing to and fro. Therefore, seeing before him what appeared to be a country woman without bundles or packages of any sort, the sentinel carelessly glanced at the signature of the permit which the girl exhibited, and let her pass by.

Greatly relieved Virginia crossed the floating bridge at the Middle Ferry, and urged her horse into a swinging pace as soon as she was

out of sight of the guard. On and on she went past stone farmhouses and occasional log cabins until at last all signs of human habitation disappeared and the country, bleak and cheerless, covered with a deep mantle of snow was before her. Here the road led into a thick stretch of woods and Virginia entered it with something like gayety hoping that Valley Forge would not be much further beyond its limits. She had proceeded but a little way, when through the trees appeared a man on horseback. He was of gigantic build, and the girl's heart fluttered apprehensively as he drew near and accosted her.

"Whither go you, madam?" he asked with a touch of brogue which showed him to be of Irish descent. "Faith! if you keep on this road you will be after going direct to the rebel camp."

"Perhaps I would like to go there," answered Virginia in a muffled voice.

"It's more than I'd be doing then," said the man laughing loudly. "Though I'm thinking that it's delighted they'd be to get Captain Fitz in their clutches. Sure, I've given the rebs cause to dread me."

“Captain Fitz!” ejaculated Virginia, drawing rein in her fright, for the name of Captain Fitz was enough to strike terror to the bravest heart.

Captain Fitz’s real name was Jim Fitzpatrick. He had at one time belonged to the American army, but having no mind for the discipline and hardships which he was compelled to undergo, he deserted and now ranged the country making Whigs the particular objects of his vengeance. As his sympathies were notoriously with the British, he left Tories uninjured.

“You need not be alarmed, madam. I don’t make war on women. Once I met an old woman in this very wood, and she confided to me the fact that she was going to the city to buy some supplies but that she was afraid that she would meet Captain Fitz and be robbed. It was rare sport,” continued the robber, laughing at the remembrance, “to see her face when I told her that I was Captain Fitz. You have no purse, have you?”

“No, sir; where could a poor woman like me get any money?”

“Faith, ’tis a problem for us all,” replied he

gaily. "They are in sore straits at the Forge and I'm hoping some of their friends will be after sending them some money. I've been haunting the woods for that reason. I'm badly in need of the article myself." He laughed again.

"Did you take the poor woman's purse?" asked the girl, her heart beating so that she feared that he might hear it.

"Take her purse? Didn't I say that I didn't make war on women?" There was a note of indignation in the Captain's voice. "Of course I didn't take it. I have an old mother of my own. Nobody that's poor needs to be afraid of Captain Fitz, unless they be carrying money to the rebs. That's different."

An idea flashed into Virginia's mind and she resolved on a bold move.

"Since you are so good to women," said she timidly, "perhaps you won't mind going part of the way with me. I am afraid."

"Nobody's going to hurt ye," said the robber good-naturedly, a little flattered by this appeal. "An old woman's safe most anywhere. I'll go through the woods with you.

That is your worst place ; then I shall have to return lest some booty escape me. Faith, some gold ought to be passing this way soon ! ”

“ You are very kind,” said Virginia, hoping that she had found the right way to get rid of his presence. “ You must have had many interesting experiences. Would you mind telling me some of them ? ”

“ Oh, I could tell you hair raisers, old lady,” laughed the man, “ but I don’t want to frighten you. Your sons—by the way, I suppose you are going to see your sons ? ”

Virginia shook her head.

“ Your brothers, then ? ”

“ Yes ; my brothers,” returned the girl eagerly. They were her brothers in the cause she thought. “ Poor fellows ! I have no socks for them,” she added.

“ They need ’em bad too,” remarked the robber, who seemed to be conversant with the state of affairs at the patriot camp. “ ’Twill make you feel bad, old lady, if you’ve got nothing for them.”

“ I know ; ” Virginia’s voice trembled a little. It was from fear, but the desperado

deemed it emotion. "But I wanted to see them."

"Women are all alike," observed Captain Fitz. "My mother would come to me if I were sick, and would comfort me even if she hadn't a thing to give me. Well, here we are through the woods and I'll leave you. A safe journey to you. They will be horrified when they find you have been with Captain Fitz. Tell them he isn't so black as he's painted."

"Good-day to you, sir, and thank you for your kindness," said Virginia, trying to conceal her eagerness for him to be gone.

"Good-day." Captain Fitz wheeled his powerful charger and galloped back into the woods. The girl rode on afraid to look behind her, and also afraid to increase the speed of her horse lest the Captain should suspect something if he were watching her. But as the minutes went by and she saw no more of him, her fears were allayed and she urged Selim to greater speed.

The excitement of meeting with the desperado had rendered Virginia oblivious to the cold, but now she realized that she was chilled through and through. The hills were about

her, and the wind which had increased in violence in the last hour swept down their snow-clad sides chilling her with its icy breath. Colder and colder it blew, until she was numbed and stiff and retained her seat in the saddle with difficulty. It seemed hours to her since she had left Jonas and Martha, though in reality it was but three.

"It can't be much further," she thought. "Surely I am nearly there. Yet there is no sign of life anywhere. If I can only reach them!" Finding that her hands were becoming too numbed to hold the bridle, she wound it round the horn of the saddle, and huddled close to the horse's back for warmth. The good animal was sturdy and accustomed to long trips, so that he swung along at a brisk pace unmindful of wind or cold.

The frigid blast cut the girl like a knife. She was so cold. Her blood seemed turning to ice. She felt it congealing in her veins. Was she freezing? Even as the thought darted into her brain a genial glow shot through her. A delicious sense of warmth pervaded her whole being, dulling her senses by its dangerous languor. A smile of ecstasy

swept over her countenance. She swayed, and then fell forward upon the horse's neck.

"More cordial, Watson. There! she is coming to." Virginia opened her eyes dazedly, the words coming to her as from a distance. Something hot was poured into her mouth. She sputtered and coughed, and then sat up, and looked about her. A soldier stood above her holding a glass in his hand, while another half-kneeling on the snow supported her.

"What is it?" she murmured drowsily. "Where am I?"

"You are at the picket lines of Valley Forge," was the answer. "Do you feel all right now?"

"Valley Forge!" Virginia started up thoroughly aroused. "I remember. Oh, take me to General Washington. I want to see him."

"You shall go to him now if you are able. Don't you know me, little one?"

The speaker lifted her to her feet and bent down to look into her face. Virginia gave one look at him, and uttered a cry of joy.

"Dudley Brandon!" she exclaimed. "Oh, I am so glad that you are here!"

“And I am glad too. If Watson and I hadn’t happened along just now it would have been the last of you. We reached you just as you fell from your horse.”

“Yes; the horse! Where is he?” asked Virginia anxiously.

“Tied to a tree over there. Bring him here, Watson. Isn’t this a pretty cold day for a little Virginia girl to be wandering around by herself? What was your uncle thinking about to let you do it?”

He was chafing her hands gently as he talked, watching her closely for further signs of drowsiness. But Virginia was thoroughly awakened and anxious to perform the rest of her errand.

“Uncle Ralph doesn’t know that I am here,” she said rapidly. “In fact no one knows. I came to bring aid to the soldiers.”

“Which accounts for the disguise.” Dudley Brandon picked up the bonnet and mask which had been removed and handed them to her. “Here is your horse, little one. Now we will go to General Washington.”

“Oh dear!” sighed the girl ruefully.

"Can't we walk, Mr. Brandon? I don't believe that I can ever ride again."

"You poor child! I am afraid that it is too far to walk, but you can try. I will lead the horse."

He threw the bridle over his arm and accommodated his steps to hers. The girl moved stiffly at first but soon found her steps growing brisker. And so, alternately walking and riding, they reached the rugged hollow in the hills where the American army was encamped.

Virginia was so anxious to see the commander-in-chief that she paid little heed to her surroundings. The house in which General Washington had his headquarters was a small stone building which had been made more commodious by the addition of a log cabin.

"Tell General Washington that Colonel Brandon wishes to speak with him, orderly," said Brandon to a young fellow who stood without the door. "You said you had brought aid, child, but you have not told me of what nature."

"The blankets," replied Virginia. "It is in the blankets."

“Well, I declare!” ejaculated Colonel Brandon taking them from Selim’s back. “The blankets of all things!”

“The General will see you, Colonel,” reported the orderly.

“I am glad that you are with me,” whispered Virginia. “I believe that I would be afraid.”

“There is no need, little one. The General is one of the best men in the world. You cannot help but be drawn to him.”

He opened the door of the room which was used by the commander-in-chief for his office, and, followed by Virginia, entered. A tall, dignified figure turned from the window and advanced toward them.

“You wished to see me, Colonel,” said a deep earnest voice.

“I bring this girl, sir,” said Colonel Brandon saluting. “At the risk of her life she has brought us aid from the city. Sergeant Watson and I found her almost frozen to death.”

“Aid is very welcome, my child,” said Washington taking the girl’s hands between his own, “but we do not desire it at the peril of life.”

Virginia could not speak. A sense of awe filled her at being in the presence of the great commander, and her heart swelled as she saw how careworn and anxious his face looked. She trembled violently, and suddenly broke into weeping.

“There, there, child! You are nervous and overwrought,” and the General stroked her hair gently. “You must be very tired. Such an experience would fatigue any one.”

“I am not tired,” sobbed Virginia. “I—I am sorry for you.”

The hand that lay within the General’s was clasped tightly, and after a moment’s silence the chief said in a voice that was not quite steady :

“Thank you for your sympathy, child. It makes the burden easier to bear when thus lightened.”

“Could you tell the General about the aid you have brought, little one?” suggested Dudley Brandon gently.

“Yes;” and Virginia controlled herself with an effort. “I am not a very good messenger, am I, to forget my errand? Jonas Mayhugh was stricken with the fever, sir, and

he sent me to get Samuel Farley to bring you the gold which had been collected for the soldiers. But Samuel had been arrested this very morning by General Howe. I did not know what to do, and so, because I knew that you were sorely in need of help, I brought it myself. Here it is." She caught hold of the blankets. "See! there are two quilted together. Martha did it so that no one would ever know that the gold was there. Jonas said that you were to have the blankets, and that more would be forthcoming."

"My brave girl, you have done nobly." The moisture stood in Washington's eyes. "The gold is a godsend. The boys have tasted no meat for days. It will put new life into them. If all Americans were such patriots as you, and Jonas, and Martha, there would be no more suffering at Valley Forge."

"It is quite a sum too," said Brandon, who had been ripping out Martha's quilting. "Those blessed Quakers!"

"And this blessed girl, Brandon! Little good would the gold have done us had she not brought it. It is a wonder that she ever

reached here with it. The country is thronged with desperadoes."

"I did meet with Captain Fitz," said Virginia.

"What! Jim Fitzpatrick! The notorious Fitz?" cried Brandon, springing to his feet.

"Yes; but he did not hurt me. He said that he did not war on women. I found that I was in no danger as long as he did not know that I had the gold." And Virginia recounted simply the meeting with Captain Fitz and the conversation.

"Child, child," said Washington, a troubled look on his face, while Brandon paced the floor restlessly, "what a risk you have run. I am truly thankful Martha insisted upon that disguise."

"He said that old women were safe," said Virginia, smiling at the kind face above her. "He wanted gold though, and if he had known that I had it, I would not have fared so well. I would risk more than that to bring aid to the soldiers. I am glad if I have helped some."

"My dear girl," began the General, when a voice sounded from without:

“Just see if the General is at liberty, will you, orderly?”

Virginia started at the first sound of the voice, and listened intently.

“Ralph! Ralph!” she screamed. “It is Ralph!” She darted to the door and flung it open. “Ralph,” she cried in an ecstasy of joy, throwing her arms about the gaunt figure of the young fellow that stood there, “don’t you know me? Oh, Ralph, Ralph!”

“Why!” exclaimed the lad boyishly, forgetting the presence of the commander-in-chief. “It’s Virgie!”

“How tall you have grown!” exclaimed Virginia after the first transport was over. “And oh, how thin you are!”

“Well I can’t say the same for you,” returned Ralph. “I say, Virgie, how queer you look. You’ve gotten fat! You look just like Mammy Began used to. You must have had lots to eat.” This last a trifle wistfully.

“You poor dear!” laughed Virginia through her tears. “Can’t you see that I am made up to look like a fat woman? I could not have come if I hadn’t.”

“How in the world did you come, anyhow?”

I thought you were home in Virginia. How is father? Is he here too?"

Virginia explained rapidly the cause of their presence in Philadelphia, and the reason for her coming to Valley Forge.

"Well, you are a plucky one!" said Ralph admiringly. "I always knew that you had grit, but I didn't know that you would go so far."

"And you gave your services to the General just as you said you would," said Virginia proudly.

"The General!" The young fellow started guiltily, and, turning in some confusion to the commander, saluted quickly. "I beg your pardon, sir," he said rather sheepishly. "I was so glad to see my cousin that I forgot all about my duty."

"Never mind, my boy," was Washington's rejoinder. "It is excusable under the circumstances. You should be proud of your cousin, sir. Not every girl would render such service as she has."

"She was always wanting to do something for the country," laughed Ralph. "She was a patriot before I was. Indeed she helped to change me."

“There will be many things that you will wish to talk over with her,” said the chief kindly. “You may be relieved from further duty, Pendleton. Send Darlington to me in your place. Mrs. Washington and myself will be pleased to have you and your cousin sup with us to-night.”

“Thank you, sir,” returned Ralph, his face growing red. “It’s awfully kind of you, but I can’t accept.”

“Why?” asked the General in surprise.

“Why, why,” stammered Ralph, “it isn’t my turn. I was here last, you know, and the boys won’t like for me to wear the suit too often.”

“I think they will not object when they learn the cause,” returned the General with a smile, but he sighed too. Despite the hardships it was a matter of joke in the camp that there was but one dress suit among the officers and whoever was invited to dine at headquarters wore it.

“Then I will tell them, sir.” Ralph saluted, and looked hesitatingly at Virginia.

“I will take her to Mrs. Washington, my

boy. She will remain with her for the night. Join us there as soon as you can."

Virginia looked up in some dismay. "Why, I ought to go back to the city," she exclaimed. "Jonas and Martha will be uneasy."

"You cannot return to-night, my child. See! it is quite dark."

Night had indeed fallen upon the camp, and through the window Virginia could see the lights of the fires upon the hillsides, and the glimmer of torches carried hither and thither. Within the apartment the great log fire cast a ruddy glow over the room driving the shadows into the corners where they hung heavy and dark.

"Come, my child, let us go to Mrs. Washington," said the General kindly. "You will have to content yourself with us for the night. Your cousin will join us presently."

Virginia arose and obediently followed him into another room.

CHAPTER XV

LADY WASHINGTON

A PLUMP, rather plain looking, middle-aged woman, clad in a brown homespun gown with a snowy kerchief folded over her bosom, rose from a group of women as the General entered with Virginia.

“My dear Patsy,” said Washington approaching her, “this brave girl has come from the city to bring us aid. I put her in your hands for entertainment for the night. Her cousin, Mr. Pendleton, will join us presently at supper. We cannot honor her too highly for what she hath done.”

“Any friend is welcome but especially one who brings us aid at the present time,” said Martha Washington in a sweet voice. “You are thrice welcome, my dear. Do you not wish to rest after your journey? You must be greatly fatigued.”

“I am not at all tired, madam. I thank

you for the offer, but if I may —— If I might," hesitating a little.

"Yes, my dear. Be not afraid. We will gladly do whatever you wish, if it lies in our power," encouraged the lady kindly.

"It is the clothes," burst from the girl as the General withdrew to his office. "Friend Martha dressed me to look like a fat woman, and put so much over my own garb that I feel stuffed. Dear madam, if I could get rid of them before Ralph comes."

"Certainly, child." The fresh young voice of the girl touched a precious memory in the lady's heart for she had lost her own daughter, a girl but little older than Virginia, a few years before. With her own hands she helped Virginia to remove the dress and the many layers of clothing with which Martha had swathed her form.

"There!" said Virginia, with a sigh of relief as she stood revealed in her own garments. "I feel better. It is nice not to be so bundled up, but I doubt not but that Martha's wrappings helped to keep me from freezing."

"I doubt it not too," said Mrs. Washington. "These are the wives of our officers, my dear.

We employ our time working for the soldiers, trying to relieve a few of their many miseries. Sit with us and while we work tell us, if you will, of the aid you brought and the manner of bringing it."

She seated Virginia by her side and resumed her knitting. The girl felt thoroughly at ease, made so by the affability of the lady's manner. The other ladies gave her kindly and cordial greetings and plied their needles blithely in the mending of clothes or the making of shirts. The girl related again how she had come to be the bearer of aid to the camp and her joy at finding her cousin there. When she had finished the recital Mrs. Washington drew her to her and kissed her.

"You are a brave little girl," she said. "But your courage comes to you naturally, for the Pendletons have always been brave to rashness. Ralph is almost reckless in his courage. However the General speaks well of him, and hath taken him on his staff. I would that Colonel Pendleton would follow in the steps of his son and niece."

"I would so too," replied Virginia sadly, "but I fear that he never will. He was so

angry when Ralph left home. He will not let us speak of him, and has said that he is no longer his son."

"Poor boy!" The motherly heart of the lady yearned over the lad at this communication and she resolved to be very kind to him. "And how will this act of yours be received? What will happen to you when you return?"

"Perhaps he will not know of it," said Virginia lightly. She felt in such an exalted mood over the successful issue of her journey and the meeting with Ralph that no thought of the consequences could dampen her joy. "They may think that I have spent the night with Martha, though Mrs. Pendleton does not like for me to be away without permission. I am more uneasy over what Martha will think."

After a time the ladies were joined by the General, some officers and Ralph, and all proceeded to the dining-room, an apartment in the log cabin addition of the house. The meal was very plain. Virginia was aghast at its frugality and mentally contrasted it with the dinner at her uncle's house when General

Howe had dined with them. All ate heartily and seemed to enjoy the fare, plain though it was. Presently a shout went up outside, and the ladies looked inquiringly at the chief.

"'Tis the rejoicing of the soldiers," remarked Washington. "Thanks to our young guest the men have meat to-night. The first for many days."

Virginia looked at Ralph's gaunt and wasted figure, at the grave faces of the commander and the officers and the food almost choked her.

"And to think," she sobbed, unable to restrain her tears, "that we have so much."

"There! child," soothed Mrs. Washington gently. "'Twill be better now. Supplies will soon be coming in, and all will go well."

"It isn't far from spring now," comforted Ralph, placing his arm about her. "When it comes we're going into Philadelphia ourselves. Virgie, I am going to tell the General how you tricked me into playing Yankee Doodle."

Virginia dried her tears, and was soon laughing and chatting gaily.

"What did father do after I left home?" asked Ralph as they withdrew into a corner

after the meal ; the others considerably retiring to the other end of the room.

“ He was very angry. He searched days and days for you and then, when he found that he could get no trace of you, he forbade us to mention your name. I don’t believe that he will ever forgive you, Ralph.”

“ Yes, he will,” said the lad hopefully. “ When the war is over he will be glad that I did as I have done.”

“ Do you think we will win, Ralph ? ”

“ There isn’t any doubt of it,” answered the boy with enthusiasm. “ If we can just get through this winter, and there’s no denying that things are a bit tough now, we’ll whip the British badly. With the General for a leader we can’t help but win. And as for Lady Washington, she is the best woman that ever drew breath. She goes among the sick soldiers every day, providing all the comforts she can for them. We fellows just worship her. She is the worthy wife of the chief.”

“ But, Ralph, how did you find them ? ” asked Virginia. “ I have wondered often about it. Where did you join the army ? ”

“ I skirted across the country to Williams-

burg, and there I fell in with a company of militia that were to join the army in New York. But hearing that the General had been forced into New Jersey we headed that way and there joined him. I told the commander the whole affair, and I have been on his staff ever since."

“But what do you do, Ralph? You are too young to fight.”

“I do it, though, Virgie. The General thought I was older than I was when I enlisted. It was a long time before he found out how young I was. Then he needed men so badly that he overlooked the matter though he would have sent me home if he had known at first. I will be all right in the spring because I will be seventeen then. Have they been very unkind to you, Virgie, since I left?”

“Not very,” said Virginia unwilling to tell how neglected she had been. “It’s so lonesome without you.”

“There were Polly and Joe,” laughed Ralph mischievously. “How could you miss me when you had them? Has Joe gone into the army yet?”

"He goes this spring. How can you think that any one can take your place? You were so good to me."

"I'll be better still when the war is over. I've learned a great deal in the time I've been away. I'll take you round in the camp in the morning, and let you see where I bunk. It isn't very luxurious, but it might be worse."

"Meantime, suppose you let me take your cousin to bed," interrupted Mrs. Washington, coming to them at this moment. "I know that she must be very tired. You will have time for further conversation to-morrow. Come, my dear."

"I believe that I am tired," said Virginia, rising. "Although I did not feel so before. Good-night, Ralph. It's so good to see you again." She clung to him for a moment and then followed Mrs. Washington.

"We have two rooms of good Mr. Potts' house," explained the lady as they left the apartment. "The General uses one for a business office, and the other is our sleeping chamber. The dining-room we had built for more comfort. The family occupy the rest of the

house, but Mrs. Potts tells me that she can put you with her eldest daughter."

"That will do nicely," said Virginia.

"I would not talk much, if I were you, dear. I know 'tis the custom of girls to spend the night hours thus, but you have been through a great deal to-day, and the rest will be better for you. I have cautioned Eliza, and now I advise you."

She took Virginia in her arms and embraced her tenderly. "You remind me of my Martha," she said wistfully. "You have the same slender, graceful figure, and your ways, as were hers, are sweet and winning. Good-night, and God bless you, my dear."

"Good-night," answered the girl softly. The lady lingered a moment to tuck her snugly in bed and then retired.

It was late the next morning before the girl awoke. Ralph had been waiting for her for a long time. After breakfasting he took her to the encampment. The Valley was protected on one side by the Schuylkill River and on the other by hills which were covered with woods. Washington's life guard was stationed near the river in sight of headquarters, and

the various brigades were scattered over the adjoining hillsides. The army was housed in log cabins which had been built under the direction of the commander-in-chief, who, experienced frontiersman that he was, knew that it was the only way to winter his men with any degree of comfort.

"But where are your clothes?" asked Virginia, as Ralph took her to the hut which he occupied in common with a number of others.

"Clothes?" Ralph burst into a laugh. "My dear girl, clothes are a superfluous article. We are fortunate if we can find enough to cover us. Some of the men haven't even so much as that."

"I don't see what is to become of you," said the girl sadly, her eyes filling at the sight of the wretchedness about her. "And, Ralph, there isn't a thing in here but some straw and the fire. Where do you sleep?"

"You forget the blankets, Miss Pendleton," reminded Ralph, trying to divert her mind from the miserable aspect of affairs. "When you make an enumeration of the furniture don't forget to include them, please. We couldn't sleep if it were not for them. Let us

go back to Lady Washington. I think you've seen enough of this."

"Yes; let us go back. I wish I could do something to help. In fact," sighed Virginia, "if you don't get help soon I don't believe that there will be any of you left to fight next spring."

"Oh, yes, there will. If we can stand this, we can stand anything," said Ralph soberly. "We don't think about our woes any more than we can help, Virgie. If we did it would take the heart out of us. We know that when the people know of it they will help. Why the colony of Virginia would send everything in the colony here if she knew it. But we don't want the British to know how bad off we are. Things will be better soon."

"True for you, my boy," said Washington, joining them. "We are certain to be helped soon. Colonel Brandon will act as your escort, my child. He and his company are going out for information, and will take you as near the city as they can. They will be ready to start soon, and, while I do not wish to shorten your visit with your cousin, it will

be better for you to get back as quickly as possible. It seems best, my child."

"I know," replied Virginia. "Jonas and Martha will be worried, and I ought to go back. I am ready at any time, sir."

"Then let Mrs. Washington assist you in resuming your attire of yesterday. I agree with Friend Martha that that fair face should be covered."

So Virginia put on again the disguise, and was soon ready to return to the city.

"I shall be uneasy, my dear, until I know of your safety," said Lady Washington, embracing her. "Get Jonas to send word of the outcome. I hope that this will not bring trouble upon you."

"I think it will not," rejoined Virginia confidently. "I thank you for your kindness to me, madam. You'll be good to Ralph, won't you?"

"I will indeed, dear." The lady kissed her again, the tears brimming her eyes. "God bless you for your noble deed."

"Ralph, write to me," whispered Virginia holding Ralph fast. "And I will get word to you whenever I can. Good-bye!"

“Good-bye!” The lad’s voice was husky and he held her close. “Don’t let father know how badly off we are, Virgie. It might make him feel sorry. I’d like to send some word to the folks, and yet—— No; don’t say anything about me. That will be best. And, Virgie, you are the best little thing in the world. Don’t worry! Everything will come out all right.”

“Ralph, Ralph,” she sobbed over and over again heart-brokenly. “I can’t leave you here to starve.”

“I’m not going to die that way,” returned Ralph jocularly. “Die by starving when a lot of fat redcoats are just waiting to get a crack at me? What do you take me for? Here is your horse, Virgie.”

He unclasped her clinging arms, and lifted her to the saddle. Virginia could not speak. General Washington himself tucked a blanket about her.

“Don’t grieve over him, little girl,” he said gently. “He shall be in my care.”

The girl looked the thanks she could not utter. Colonel Brandon rode to her side, and the company went slowly out of the valley.

For a long time Virginia sobbed softly. Gradually, however, her emotion exhausted itself and she became calm. Then the Colonel engaged her in conversation. Virginia listened at first apathetically, but presently as a sudden thought struck her she looked up at him quickly.

“Colonel Brandon,” she cried.

“Well, little one, what is it?”

“Do you know that Uncle Ralph told me that I must never talk to you. He said that I must shun you as I would the plague.”

“That was kind of him,” was the cool remark of the Colonel. “Did he assign any reason for such a command?”

“He said that you were my enemy. My deadly enemy! Why are you?”

“I am not, child. Did we not strike a compact of friendship the first day we met? I have often thought of you since then, and of your words that you would love and pray for me. My child, there is no reason why I should be your enemy. Ralph Pendleton and I have ill feeling betwixt us but it does not extend to his family.”

“He said that you caused my mother’s death.”

“Caused your mother’s death?” repeated Dudley Brandon in astonishment. “My dear girl, how could I? I never knew your mother. I suppose that your father was Colonel Pendleton’s brother, but I never met the lady whom he married.”

“I am not any kin to Colonel Pendleton,” returned Virginia. “I don’t know who my mother was either. It is all so strange! I hoped that you would know, and would tell me her name. Uncle Ralph says that I shall never learn it through him.”

“What mystery is all this?” asked the Colonel. “Don’t know your mother’s name! Not the niece of Ralph Pendleton! Then who are you, and how do you come to be with his family?”

Virginia told him all that she knew about the matter. Dudley Brandon listened attentively.

“I do not understand why he should have said such things to you,” he said at length. “I see no reason for it unless knowing that we are enemies, he does not desire that any of his family shall speak to me.”

"But he did not caution Evelyn," said Virginia. "Why would you not be her enemy as well as mine if that were the case?"

"I do not know, child. The whole thing is beyond my understanding. Were the times other than they are, Ralph Pendleton should render me an account of the matter. And he shall do it yet. But of this do you be assured: in all the world there lives no truer friend to you than Dudley Brandon. I am no enemy of yours. I would not harm you, nor permit harm to come to you if I could prevent it. Do you believe me?"

"Yes, sir; I have always believed it. I told Uncle Ralph so at the time, and I would not promise never to speak to you."

"You would not?" Brandon's grave face relaxed into a smile. "What a loyal friend you are, little girl. I am glad that you would not. But now we have come to the place where we must part, child. Before you go, I want the assurance from your lips that you do not believe that I am your enemy. Dudley Brandon the enemy of a little thing like you! Say that you do not believe it."

"I do not," answered Virginia sweetly. "I

never will, and there is my hand on it. We are friends, aren't we?"

"Friends leal and true, little one. I don't like the idea of your going into that city alone. Would that I might take you in myself, or that you could have stayed with Lady Washington. But what could they do to a child like you even if the whole thing were discovered? Ralph Pendleton hath influence. Surely he would exert it in your behalf. But I make you uneasy when perhaps there is no necessity. Send word of your welfare, child. I would not like a daughter of mine in your position."

"There is no cause for uneasiness, sir. Martha and Jonas will shield me. I fear no trouble."

"God grant that you will have none, little one. Good-bye!"

"Good-bye." He pressed her hand warmly, and Virginia rode ahead. Colonel Brandon watched her until she was lost to view. Then giving the command to his men cantered off in another direction.

Virginia soon passed Samuel Farley's house, which looked as deserted as ever, and then

came to the mill where the sack of flour awaited her. She had this placed on the saddle before her, and then rode into the city. She had scarcely passed the guard before she was stopped and a soldier, seizing the bridle of the horse, exclaimed :

“ You are my prisoner ! I arrest you by the order of General Howe.”

CHAPTER XVI

A SEVERE TRIAL

“YOUR prisoner?” Virginia exclaimed in dismay. “Why should I be your prisoner, sir?”

“Because you have been within the camp of the enemy,” was the reply. “You will have to be taken to General Howe.”

The girl said no more but nerved herself to meet this new ordeal. In silence she was led to the headquarters of General Howe on Market Street. The streets were filled with soldiers and people, and to the sensitive mind of the girl every one was cognizant of her arrest. In reality the occurrence was so common, scarcely a day passing that numbers of suspected persons were not subjected to the same thing, that little notice was taken of the matter. The coach which the British General had confiscated for his own use stood before the door, and Sir William was just on the

point of entering it when the girl and her captors came up.

“What is it, Martin?” asked the General.

“The person you told us to be on the lookout for, sir,” returned Martin, saluting.

“Very well. I will attend to the case immediately. Take her to my office.”

Martin lifted Virginia from her horse, and followed the General into the house.

“Remove your mask and head-dress,” commanded the General peremptorily.

Tremblingly Virginia obeyed the command. General Howe gazed at her for several moments in silence, and then said sternly,

“Will you tell me why you went out of the city, my young lady?”

“I went for flour for Martha Mayhugh,” answered the girl not daring to raise her eyes. “Jonas was so sick that Martha could not go.”

“Is not the mill two miles from the city?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Then why have you been gone since yesterday?”

Virginia did not reply.

“You have been gone since yesterday, have

you not ? ” asked the General, his usual affable manner giving place to one of severity.

“ Yes, sir.”

“ It has become known to me that you penetrated through the enemy’s lines. There would be but three reasons for such an act : To take supplies, carry information to the enemy, or to gather it for us. Which motive influenced you ? ”

“ None of them, sir.”

“ None of them ? ” repeated Sir William in surprise. “ Did you not go for Jonas Mayhugh to carry supplies to the Americans ? Do you not know that removing goods from the city without a permit is severely punished ? ”

“ Yes, sir ; I know it,” answered Virginia, clearly, her self-possession returning to her, her mind on the alert for she feared that she might make some admission that would implicate Jonas. “ But I took no goods from the city.”

“ You did not ? Then was it information that you carried ? ”

“ No, sir.”

“ Why then did Jonas send you ? You will

admit that you were within the enemy's lines?"

"I admit that. But Jonas did not send me. He did not know that I was going. No one knew it but myself."

"But your motive," queried Sir William, bending toward her, and looking into her eyes. "Tell me your motive."

Virginia returned the look squarely, and closed her lips tightly.

"See here, my little girl," and the General assumed his most winning air, "you must tell me all about it. I was at your uncle's when it became known to us that you had gone out of the city in that disguise. Now it is improbable that such an idea could have originated with a girl like you. We have suspected Jonas for some time of giving aid to the rebels. What more natural than to send you when he found himself unable to go. You will not be betraying any confidence to tell me about the matter, for we know about Jonas. You are young, and a relative of Colonel Pendleton's. For that reason I will overlook this escapade if you will tell me about Jonas."

"Jonas did not know that I was going," re-

iterated Virginia with firmness. "Martha dressed me in this manner because she feared that I might be annoyed did I go in my own garb. I was once, you remember, sir."

"The story would be plausible enough had you remained but a short time. I would pass it without question then, but you were gone the entire night. Now if Jonas Mayhugh did not send you, who did? And for what purpose were you sent?" He turned to her abruptly. "I shall have to have you searched."

"Oh, no!" exclaimed the girl quickly, the blood dyeing her face and throat. "O, sir, do not do that. I have nothing concealed. Please, Sir William, do not subject me to that."

"Then you must tell me the whole thing," said the General gravely. "If you do not, I fear there will be worse things in store for you than searching."

"But Jonas did not send me, sir," said the girl tearfully. "He did not dream of my going there."

"Then answer me one question. Will you do that?"

"If I can, sir."

"You can do it with just one word. Do you not know that Jonas gives aid to the rebels?"

Virginia turned very pale, but answered not a word.

"You condemn him by your silence," observed Sir William. "I will order his arrest at once. As for you, you place yourself in the position of a spy. If you did not carry supplies you must have carried information."

"No," uttered Virginia's white lips. "I did not carry information. I am no spy."

"Did you go to Valley Forge?" queried Sir William suddenly. "Then once again, girl, I give you your chance. How are Washington and his army situated? Are they in good condition, or are these reports of the tattered and starving state of his forces true?"

Once more the girl stood silent, but her eyes flashed scornfully. Did they think her so base as to betray her countrymen? She would die first.

"Why you are obstinacy itself," exclaimed Sir William testily. "I will no longer treat you with any consideration. Some way must

be found to make you talk. You shall be searched."

At this moment the door opened, and Colonel Pendleton entered. At sight of him Virginia uttered a cry of joy and ran to him.

"Uncle Ralph," she cried, "don't let them search me. Truly I have nothing hidden. I but brought back the flour for Martha."

"Do not come to me for protection, Virginia," said her uncle coldly. "I am mortified and ashamed that a girl of your age and breeding should comport herself in such a manner. It hath grieved me sorely. Sir William, deal with her as you think best. Her sympathies have always been with the rebels, and have been the cause of sorrow to us. She it was who influenced my son ——"

"I saw him," interrupted Virginia eagerly. "He asked me all about you. He loves you dearly, Uncle Ralph. Dearly!"

The Colonel's face grew set and cold, and he remained silent for a moment. "You need tell me no more," he said. "Have I not commanded that his name be not spoken in my presence? But why look for obedience from

you? Your waywardness transgresses all bounds."

"Perhaps that is the reason she went there," said the General in a low tone.

"But how did she know that he was there?" asked the Colonel. "No, General. Depend upon it she is in league with these Quakers. I know the perversity of her nature."

"Perchance you can manage her better than I," remarked the commander. "Take her home, Colonel, and have her searched thoroughly. Question her concerning Jonas Mayhugh. I am certain that if she would but speak she could tell of his treachery. Virginia," turning to her and speaking harshly, "I am going to send you to your uncle's house. He will question you, and it will be to your interest to confide in him. Remember that you are a prisoner. Should you continue stubborn, you shall be turned over to Cunningham. You may have heard how prisoners fare under his treatment."

Virginia became pale as death, and her limbs trembled under her. Cunningham was the wretch who had charge of the American

prisoners, and stories of his inhuman usage of them were rife in the city.

In silence she followed her uncle to his home and submitted to being searched by Mrs. Pendleton. The Colonel, after subjecting her to a severe questioning, became angry at her obduracy, and withdrew locking her in her chamber.

“There is nothing to be done with such a girl,” he exclaimed as he departed. “I see nothing for it but to turn you over to Cunningham.”

With a sob Virginia threw herself upon the bed and wept bitterly. She was afraid. Not only for herself but for Jonas and Martha. If she could only warn them.

“They are not certain,” she whispered to herself. “They want to force the truth from me so as to condemn Jonas. But they shall not. I will die first.”

The day dragged wearily by. Only once did any one visit her, and then it was one of the servants with food. Virginia tried to talk to her but the woman would not answer. Three days passed in like manner. The Colonel visited her each day, and examined her

searchingly hoping that the confinement and lack of companionship would soften her pertinacity. But though the girl grew wan and thin under the trial, her resolution became more fixed than ever to utter no word that should betray Jonas.

"This is the last time that I shall come alone, Virginia," said the Colonel on the third day. "Sir William's patience is quite exhausted and mine also. You will have to go with Cunningham. I do not like to see such a thing befall you, but you compel the action. I am powerless to prevent it longer."

Virginia uttered a moan of despair and her eyes grew large with terror.

"Must I go, Uncle Ralph?"

"You certainly must," returned Colonel Pendleton firmly. "General Howe has treated you with this great consideration on my account. But even my friendship for him, and your relationship to me cannot save you from the penalty of your act. Come, Virginia, it is not too late yet, if you will speak. I will see what I can do with the General."

He waited expecting her to speak, but Virginia sat still, her heart beating wildly. The

Colonel withdrew satisfied that this would bring the desired information, but he did not know the spirit of the girl.

She sat as he had left her, her terror increasing hourly as the day went by. No one else entered the room. No food was brought to her. The intention seemed to be to starve as well as frighten her into confessing. The night fell, and Virginia sat with wide staring eyes, starting at every sound, fearing that each moment would bring Cunningham to drag her to prison. Ten, eleven, twelve o'clock struck, and the girl suddenly rose to her feet trembling in every limb, for she distinctly heard a noise at her window.

She clasped her hands over her heart to still its beating, and stood there peering into the darkness, her eyes dilated, her being thrilled with a nameless horror. Again the sound came. Some one was at the window. In an agony of terror she ran to the door, and frantically tried to open it. It was locked and resisted her efforts. She wrung her hands, and was about to give way to despair when like a ray of light from Heaven, a thought darted into her mind. Could it be help? Would

Cunningham come by way of the window? No, no; it must be that aid was coming.

Cautiously she crept to the window. There was no sound save the swish of the branches of the noble elm that brushed the casement. There was no light save the light of the stars, and the soft reflection of the snow. Summoning all her courage she raised the sash, and leaned out.

"Is there any one there?" she called softly.

"Virginia!"

"Colonel Brandon," uttered Virginia with a sob.

"H'sh! not so loud. Hold the window open for me." The form of a man crept carefully along the branches of the tree, caught the sill, and swung himself into the room. Trembling and crying the girl caught his hands.

"Oh, Colonel Brandon," she sobbed, "I am so glad you have come. They are going to let Cunningham take me. You won't let them, will you?"

"Not while I live, child. I heard of it, so I came for you." Dudley Brandon soothed her tenderly. "There! be quiet, lest some

one hear us. Are you ready for a long ride, little one?"

"I am ready for anything to get away from here," was the girl's reply. The relief from the strain of the past few days was almost too great for her to bear, but she tried bravely to control herself.

"Then wrap yourself up warmly. What can I fasten this rope to, little girl? Anything heavy will do."

"There is the bed. Would that do?"

"The very thing." Colonel Brandon groped his way to the heavy four-posted bed and secured a rope about one of the posts. "I will lower you from the window to the ground. When you have reached it, go at once to the stable and conceal yourself in the shadows. I will come after you."

"But how did you come?" whispered the girl. "I fear for you, Colonel. They would kill you if they should catch you."

"They shan't catch me, if I can help it. I came because I feared for you," said Dudley Brandon, taking her trembling hands between his own. "I was uneasy, and could not rest satisfied until I knew of your safety. So,

disguising myself as a farmer, I came through the lines to-day. I found what had befallen you, and where you were confined. They said on the streets to-day that you were to be turned over to that brute. I could not leave my little friend to be treated like that, so I made up my mind to rescue you. I am very thankful that General Howe had the courtesy to keep you in your uncle's house else my task would not have been so easy. Now I am going to run off with you as they did in days of old," he added, hoping by this pleasantry to calm the girl who was on the verge of breaking down. "But your knight is a grizzled old man, child, in place of a fair youth. Be brave. We must lose no more time. Are you ready to go now?"

He had made the rope fast about her waist while he talked. "Steady now. Don't be afraid. Cling to the rope."

He lifted her through the window, and then the girl swung clear. Her brain reeled dizzily for a moment, but she clung tightly to the rope, and soon felt that she was being lowered to the earth. Presently her feet touched the ground, and she gave the rope a quick tug as

the signal. Untying it from about her waist, she hurried away to the stables.

It was not long before Dudley Brandon joined her, and they stole softly into the shadows of the night. On and on they walked. It seemed hours to Virginia but she uttered no complaint. At last Brandon stopped and said,

“Wait for me a moment, little one. My horse ought to be left near here for me.”

He was back almost instantly with the animal, and, swinging Virginia lightly to the saddle, leaped up behind her with a laugh of pure enjoyment.

“Won’t there be wonder and amazement among the English to-morrow? The British lion grows sluggish in his lair.”

Virginia laughed too, and leaned contentedly against his broad shoulder, caring not whither they were going so long as it was away from Philadelphia and the cruel Cunningham.

CHAPTER XVII

NEW SCENES

ON through the night rode Col. Dudley Brandon with his charge. Virginia had been so overwrought and excited during the past few days that slumber had visited her but little. Now, freed from all anxiety and no longer fearing Cunningham, her eyes grew heavy and she fell fast asleep.

When she awoke the sun was shining brightly. She looked about her dazedly, for everything was strange. Presently memory came back to her. The ride and Colonel Brandon! She had fallen asleep and had not known when they had stopped riding. She sat up and looked about her curiously. The bed was a high four poster; the room was plainly but neatly furnished, and a bright fire blazed in the fireplace.

“I wonder where I am,” she mused, rising

quickly. "It does not seem like Valley Forge. It is strange that I should not know when we reached here."

She smoothed her hair and laved her face in water. Then opening the door of the apartment she found herself in another room which seemed to serve the purpose of both kitchen and dining-room. An appetizing odor of buckwheat cakes, fried ham and coffee greeted her nostrils. A woman looked up from the fireplace where the meal was cooking, and greeted her cordially.

"Good-morning, my little lady. Have you had a nice sleep?"

"Yes, thank you." Virginia took the chair the woman proffered. "It seems queer," she said, laughing a little, "that I should go to sleep riding, and awaken in a strange place. Where is Colonel Brandon?"

"I expect it does, child. You slept so soundly that you did not waken when I put you to bed. You must have been very tired. Come, and have some breakfast. The Colonel will be back presently."

"Are we at Valley Forge?" asked Virginia, doing full justice to the meal.

“No ; but you are a good long distance from Philadelphia.”

“Do you think Uncle Ralph could find me here ?” asked Virginia fearfully.

“Bless you, child, nobody would ever think of looking for you here. But you are not to stay. Colonel Brandon is going to send you farther away than this. No telling when the British will strike us here. But here he comes now. He will tell you all about it.”

“Good-morning, little one,” said Colonel Brandon coming to her side. “How do you feel after your night ride ? You look as bright as a daisy.”

“I feel fine, sir,” replied Virginia. “I am so glad that I don’t have to see Uncle Ralph or Sir William to-day. I was so afraid that I might say something that would betray Jonas. It is so good not to dread them.”

“It must be, Virginia. Now tell me all that happened to you after you left me.”

Virginia told him all briefly.

“Perhaps they were trying to frighten you about Cunningham,” remarked Colonel Brandon reflectively. “I cannot think that Ralph Pendleton would have permitted you to go

there; yet the report was current on the street."

"He was very angry and so was Sir William," returned Virginia. "I wonder if they did arrest Jonas."

"No; Jonas was so ill with the fever that he could give no aid to the patriots, anyway, so he was let be, but Martha said they were watched closely."

"Oh, did you see them? What did they say?" cried Virginia eagerly.

"I saw them for a little while only. They thought your going to Valley Forge was a noble thing, yet they blame themselves for the trouble brought upon you."

"I would do it again if it were necessary," said the girl bravely. "It was worth all for one word from General Washington. And Ralph—I should have gone before had I known that Ralph was there."

"My little girl," said Brandon seriously, "we must consider now what to do with you. You cannot return to your uncle, and Valley Forge is out of the question. The suffering is too great, and I would not like to subject you to the misery there. A military

camp is no place for a girl. Would that I could send you to my own home in Virginia, but that too cannot be thought of since there is no one that I know with whom I could send you. Your uncle will never forgive you after this, nor receive you again under his roof."

"I had not thought of that," said Virginia, her face paling. "Why, I have no place to go! And I don't belong to anybody!"

"Will you belong to me, little girl? You remember once that you said you would like me for a father. You have no one to care for and neither have I. Suppose we adopt each other. Will you?"

Virginia uttered an exclamation of joy, and extended her hands to him impulsively. Colonel Brandon took them and held them closely within his own.

"Then you will be my child, little one?"

"Gladly, gladly," returned Virginia.

"You shall not regret it, Virginia, and should I be spared through the war I will try to bring some brightness into your life. If it be possible I will make Ralph Pendleton reveal the name of your parents. I will do

everything in my power to find out who and what you are. And I will be good to you, dear child."

"I know you will," said Virginia smiling at him brightly. "And you will help me to find my own mother's name, sir? Then I will be happy."

"Your happiness is what I desire. But now what to do with you is the question. My duty is here. I have a friend who is going to-day to his home in the Valley of Wyoming on a furlough. It is a secluded and peaceful retreat, and he has promised me to care for you there until I can take you to my own home."

"The Valley of Wyoming," said Virginia. "I do not believe that I ever heard of it."

"Never heard of Wyoming?" Dudley Brandon laughed a little as he repeated the whimsical lines familiar to all Connecticut.

"'Canaan of old, as we are told,
Where it did rain down Manna ;
Wa'n't half so good for heavenly food,
As Dyer makes Susquehanna.'

It is really a very beautiful valley and lies in the colony of Pennsylvania though peopled

by settlers from Connecticut. Its ownership has been a matter of strife for a number of years between the two colonies. No longer than three years ago the Pennymites tried to eject the Yankees from the valley but the attempt failed. The matter is still in dispute, but held in abeyance until the outcome of the present war is determined. Meantime they are a brave people and there are no truer patriots anywhere in the colonies than these same settlers. We have two companies of them in the army, and they are among our best men. It will be hard for you, little one, to be with perfect strangers; but you will soon grow to love them for their noble patriotism."

"I won't mind if they are patriots," said Virginia.

"They are certainly that," smiled Brandon. "A Tory stands but little show among them. If one is found he is expelled from the colony so you can see the nature of their patriotism. Nevertheless you will be lonesome at first."

"I do not think that I will," said Virginia. "I like them already from what you have told me, and I will try not to mind a little loneliness."

“That is my own brave girl,” said Dudley Brandon approvingly. “It will be a long ride of over fifty miles, Virginia, so that I will see if Green is ready.”

The good woman of the house assisted the girl with her wraps, and soon Colonel Brandon reappeared in company with another man.

“Virginia, this is Sergeant Green,” he said. “Sergeant, this is Miss Virginia Pendleton, who is to be my adopted daughter. She is the girl who brought relief to us at Valley Forge.”

“I am glad to meet you, miss,” said Sergeant Green extending his hand. “I have a daughter about your age. Deborah and you will be great friends.”

“Oh, have you?” cried Virginia delightedly. “Then I am sure we will be friends. Polly Daniel and I were great chums because we were both rebels.”

“Then you and my girl will be too,” laughed the Sergeant, “for Debbie is a stanch patriot. Indeed, miss, I would not dare to take you home with me if you were not one. You shall tell me all about Polly on the way. And now if you are ready we might as well be going. ’Tis a long journey.”

"And you are anxious to greet home and family, Sergeant," said the Colonel. "Good-bye, little one! I leave you in good hands. Be good to her, Sergeant."

"You shall have no cause to complain, sir," said Green, saluting.

"Good-bye," said Virginia, her heart very full but bravely suppressing her tears. "You will tell Ralph all about it, won't you?"

"Yes, and you shall have news whenever I can send it. Think of the fine times we are going to have when the war is over. Good-bye."

He lifted her into the wagon and tucked a great fur robe about her. Sergeant Green placed himself beside her, cracked the whip, and almost before she realized it, they were being rolled rapidly away. A feeling of dismay assailed the girl as a turn in the road hid the Colonel from sight and she might have given away to her emotion had not the Sergeant, divining what her silence might mean, drew her into conversation.

More than once Virginia's laugh rang out merrily as he described some episode of the camp, or related a funny saying of his baby

boy. The Sergeant had been away from his family for some months, and rejoiced that he could open up his heart to talk of them to some one. Soon the girl felt as if she had always known them. Sarah, his wife; Deborah, or Debbie as they called her, the oldest child; Johnnie, a lad of ten, and Willie the baby.

Over rough roads they traveled, sometimes through valleys and sometimes on the rugged sides of mountains; stopping at farmhouses for rest and food.

“There,” said Sergeant Green, pointing in front of them on the morning of the third day, “there is the Valley of Wyoming.” He whipped up his horses, while Virginia looked about her with some curiosity. The mountains towered above her. They were very irregular in their formation, having elevated points or deep ravines called gaps.

The valley was walled in on every side by lofty mountains and lay at a depth of a thousand feet below the Pokono range. The mountains were covered with pines, dwarf oaks and laurels interspersed with other trees—deciduous and evergreen. Through the centre of the valley flowed the Susquehanna River.

The country was rendered more picturesque by being broken into swelling elevations and lesser valleys. Hill and valley were clad in virgin snow. Smoke rose curling to the skies from hundreds of cottages. Barns surrounded by stacks of wheat showed that the staff of life was abundant. Cattle and sheep foddered from stacks in the meadows, or, sleek and thriving, stood under sheds, giving evidence that they too shared in the super-abounding plenty of this valley. Church spires and schoolhouses were in every district showing that education and the gospel were disseminated with Puritan strictness.

Sergeant Green stopped before a neat looking cottage in the Wilkesbarre district of the town of Westmoreland.

"Here we are," he said, heartily. "I guess you are as glad as I am. It got pretty tiresome riding toward the last."

Virginia let him help her out and followed him lingeringly to the house overcome by a sudden rush of loneliness. What if these people did not like her? For the first time she remembered how far away Ralph and Colonel Brandon were.

“Land sakes! Elijah Green!” ejaculated a motherly looking woman opening the door in answer to the Sergeant’s knock. “Who’d a-ever thought of seeing you here? Are you hurt?”

“No, mother,” said the Sergeant, kissing her. “I’ve been a little sick lately, and the General thought I’d better take a furlough so as to be ready for action in the spring. How are the children?”

“We are all well except the baby and he’s middlin’. So you’ve been sick? Well, you don’t look as if you had had a square meal in a month.”

“That is truer than you think,” chuckled the Sergeant. “We hadn’t had any meat for a week until this girl brought us the money to get us some. She came near freezing to death while doing it too.”

“Land sakes!” ejaculated the good woman again. “Come in, my dear,” to Virginia. “You must be tired out. Debbie,” as the children crowded around their father overwhelming him with caresses, “do you get out the quince preserves. Johnnie, catch me a chicken. Your pa is nearly starved, and this

girl doesn't look much better off. We can talk while we eat. Then we will put them both on boneset tea for a while."

Virginia felt at her ease almost immediately, and laughed as the energetic woman flew around. She was accustomed to the slow movements of Aunt Tillie in her cooking, and was amazed at the meal which was placed on the table in an incredibly short time.

Mrs. Green would permit neither of them to talk until their appetites were satisfied. Then the Sergeant was pressed to tell about Virginia and her brave deed.

"Child, just make yourself at home," said Mrs. Green, drawing Virginia to her. "You can stay here as long as you like. It will be good for Debbie to have a companion, and I like young folks about."

"But weren't you afraid?" asked Debbie, a pleasant faced maiden, smiling at her. "I should have been dreadfully frightened."

"I was when I met Captain Fitz," answered Virginia. "But I was not so much afraid of him as I was that Uncle Ralph would let Cunningham take me." And she shuddered at the remembrance.

“Do tell us all about it,” pleaded Debbie.

And so Virginia told it all from the beginning, and soon found herself quite at home with these simple, good-hearted people.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE SHADOW FALLS

VIRGINIA and Debbie soon became inseparable companions. The New England maiden was never tired of hearing of Ralph, Evelyn, and the far off plantation, while the whole family denounced the "doings" of the British Army at Philadelphia but never wearied hearing about them. Then too the fact that Virginia did not know who she was gave her an added interest in Debbie's eyes.

"How queer it would seem," she said one day to Virginia while the spinning wheel buzzed merrily, for like the other settlers the Greens were a busy people, "not to know one's own name. I don't believe that I could be anybody but Debbie Green."

"It isn't pleasant, Debbie," replied Virginia. "I'd like to have folks who really belonged to me. Uncle Ralph and Ralph used to seem as if they did, but they don't now."

Ralph is so far away, and Uncle Ralph doesn't like me any more. I wish Colonel Brandon were really my father. I would like a father, a mother, and two brothers just as you have."

"I think it would be nice, too," said Debbie, "but I would add a sister. I never had half the fun before you came that I have now. I hope Colonel Brandon won't ever come for you. Then we would always have you with us."

"You're a dear," said Virginia. "I wouldn't mind staying here always, Debbie, if you had some darkies around. I know you will laugh at me when I tell you that I just long to see a black face."

"How funny!" laughed Debbie. "Well, Virginia, your longing shall be gratified. When we have finished the work I'll ask mother to let us go to old black Jane's."

"I did not know there was a darky in the valley, Debbie. Has she been here long?"

"She came when the valley was first settled, with Madam Shipton and her husband, from Connecticut. She had been with them for a great many years, I believe. When the trouble came between the Pennymites and the settlers Mr. Shipton was killed, and Madam Shipton

and Jane had to go back to Connecticut. They came again with the next settlers, however, and stayed here. Madam Shipton died two years ago, and left Jane her cottage. She lives there all alone, and takes care of her own garden, and cattle and everything. She likes people to go to see her."

"This interests me," said Virginia. "Do let us go to her."

So after the work was finished the two girls set forth. Life in the valley was very peaceful. It was so far from the regular thoroughfares that no news of the war would have ever penetrated through its fastnesses had not the men in the army sent special messengers with intelligence. When the postman came from Hartford bringing papers and letters from far off Connecticut, his advent was a decided sensation. Life, while peaceful, was busy. The flail sounded merrily on the threshing floor. The flax break and the hatchell were in active requisition. The spinning-wheel buzzed its round while the shuttle sped its rapid flight.

The spring had opened early. The air was fragrant with the breath of flowers, and the girls stopped often to cull the pretty blossoms.

"You are not going up the mountain, are you, girls?" asked a tall, gray-haired man whom they met.

"No, Colonel Butler," answered Debbie. "We are going to black Jane."

"That is all right then. Has your father gone back to the army yet, Debbie?"

"He went yesterday. Mother said that the place of the whole company was at home."

"Your mother is right. Tell her that we have sent word to the Continental Congress that we must have protection."

"What is it all about, Debbie?" asked Virginia as they left Colonel Butler. "Why should we need protection? It doesn't seem as if anything could harm us here."

"It is the Indians," replied Debbie, a shadow falling over her young face. "They live to the north of us, and the people are afraid of an uprising."

"Those that come in seem peaceable, Debbie."

"You can't tell anything about them," said Debbie. "They are so treacherous. Mother believes that they are spies sent to watch us by the Six Nations. She didn't want father

to leave us a bit, but he had to go back. Here we are, Virginia."

An old negro woman was bending over a garden bed planting some seeds. She hurried forward to greet them when she became assured that they were really coming in.

"Howdy do, chilluns. Kum right in. I'se powerful glad to see you."

"How do you do, aunty?" said Virginia, going to her at once, her heart bounding with delight at sight of the black face.

"Mercy! Howdy do, chile. Who is you dat you call me aunty? Ain't heard dat fer yars. What you doin' up hyar? Dis ain't no place fer you."

She bustled about them, making them sit in her best chairs. Debbie watched Virginia with amusement. She could not understand her joy at being with a darky. Old Jane brought out some cake and fresh milk, and set it before them, hovering around Virginia like a mother hen.

"Whar you kum frum?" she asked.

"From Virginia, aunty. My name is Virginia too."

"Virginny? Does you kum frum ole Vir-

ginny?" ejaculated the negress. "I usen to lib dere. What paht, chile?"

"Near Richmond town," replied Virginia. "My name is Virginia Pendleton. To whom did you belong, aunty?"

"Pendleton!" The old woman let the pitcher of milk fall with a crash, and the foamy contents spread over her spotless floor. Grabbing a cloth she daubed at it vigorously, and then turned again to Virginia.

"'Scuse me, chile. I'm narvous, I reckon, and didn't 'zactly ketch what you wuz sayin'. Did you say Pendleton wuz your name?"

"Yes; Virginia Pendleton."

"Marse Ralph Pendleton's darter?"

"Not his daughter, aunty; his niece. Did you know Uncle Ralph?" asked the girl in surprise.

"Sum," was the cautious rejoinder. "Dat is, not much, chile. I nebber knowed dat Marse Ralph's brudder mahied. Who'd 'e mahy, I'd laik ter know. You done look laik no Pendleton."

She touched Virginia's hair gently, and gave her a keen scrutiny. Virginia was somewhat embarrassed by her searching gaze.

"No, I don't look like them, aunty," she said. "I don't really belong to them, but I've always lived with them."

"Who is you den?"

"I don't know. You won't put me out of your good graces because I don't, will you?"

"No; you is all right." The old woman withdrew her intent gaze slowly. "Is Marse Ralph hyar too?"

"No; he isn't, and he doesn't know that I am here," laughed Virginia. "I expect you would like to see him if you used to know him."

"See him! No, chile. I ain't got no call ter see Marse Ralph. Nebber did laik him nohow. I laiked him lessen I ebber did after—I am glad dat you ain't no kin ob hissen," she broke off abruptly. "I'se powerful glad dat you kum ter see me. I laiks to hab de white folks kum, 'specially when dey's frum de souf. 'Pears laik ole times."

"You don't seem to like Uncle Ralph, aunty," smiled Virginia.

"No; nebber did. Done want ter hear nuffin' 'bout him. How's your mar, Miss Debbie?"

"Quite well, thank you, Jane."

And so the chat went on. There was no further reference to Colonel Pendleton, although Virginia strove to turn the conversation into that channel. Then the girls took their leave, the old woman making them promise to come often.

"Wasn't it queer that she knew your uncle, Virginia?"

"Yes," answered Virginia, musingly, "it was. When I get better acquainted with her I am going to ask her why. Wouldn't it be strange if she had known my mother? But that could hardly be."

"Look!" said Debbie, suddenly. "There is Rain-in-the-Face. I wonder what is the matter with him."

Over on one side of the road Virginia saw an Indian extended at full length upon the grass.

"Let's see, Debbie. I believe he is sick."

"Shamming most likely," said Debbie, scornfully, who had little use for the noble red man. "We would better not go near him."

"Oh, yes; he may really be sick." Vir-

ginia walked over to where the prostrate Indian lay, and bent over him.

"Are you sick, Rain-in-the-Face?" she asked, softly.

The Indian opened his eyes and looked straight into the pitying orbs of the girl.

"Ugh!" he grunted. "Much sick."

"Do you want some water? What can I do for you?"

"Water," was the brief reply.

"Debbie, run into a cottage, and get a cup, please," said Virginia. "I will bathe his head."

With much grumbling Debbie ran for the cup while Virginia laved the face and forehead of the brave, and brought several cups of water to him. He drank thirstily.

"Do you feel better?" she asked presently as he sat up.

"Much better. Pale maiden good to Rain-in-the-Face. He will not forget." He rose as he spoke, and without another word strode off.

"See! he actually did feel bad, Debbie," said Virginia. "And he seemed very grateful."

"Well, maybe he was sick," retorted Deb-

bie. "You never can tell anything about them. He recovered very rapidly, I think. Colonel Butler," calling to that gentleman who was passing them, "Virginia has begun to fetch water for the Indians."

"Pray Heaven that no worse fate befall her," returned Colonel Butler, gravely. "Some Indians with their squaws have come into the town, and we fear that they mean mischief. Lieutenant Blackman is plying one with questions, hoping to find their intent. I am going to see what the outcome is. You'd better get back to the house, girls."

He passed on, and the girls hastened home. But though the rumors grew and the indications looked more and more as though the savages and their English allies were meditating an attack, nothing could be learned definitely. Every able-bodied man was away with the army. Wyoming was practically defenseless; so all the young men, some of whom were the merest boys, were formed into scouting parties to guard the inhabitants against surprise. The old men formed companies and performed the duties of the forts. Some portion of the militia was on duty all

the time. The defenses were made as strong as possible, and runners sent to the Continental Congress for aid. In this manner the spring lengthened into summer and still the attack came not.

One day Virginia was returning from old Jane's cottage when she heard a low "hist" from some bushes. Much alarmed she drew near to see what it could mean. A red face looked out at her from the parted bushes.

"Pale maiden be not afraid," said the Indian in a low voice, and the girl was relieved to see that it was Rain-in-the-Face. "Listen to the words of Rain-in-the-Face for they are heavy with import. Because you have been good to him he tells you this. Not many suns will pass before the valley will swim in blood. Its people are doomed. The English and the braves march even now toward it, and their bayonets and tomahawks are eager to drink the blood of the whites. I have said."

"But, Rain-in-the-Face," called Virginia wildly, "tell me——" but the savage was gone.

The girl ran as fast as she could to the house of Col. Zebulon Butler which was used



"ITS PEOPLE ARE DOOMED," SAID THE INDIAN

as the town guide-post, and reported what Rain-in-the-Face had told her.

“The time has come,” said the gray-haired soldier gravely. “God help us and our families if aid be not forthcoming. There is no near neighbor upon whom we can rely. If the Continental Congress and the army forget us, we have looked our last upon Wyoming.”

With heavy heart Virginia went slowly to Mrs. Green’s to tell the dread news.

CHAPTER XIX

IN THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW

MRS. GREEN received Virginia's tidings with the calmness of despair.

"The valley has been menaced for a long time," she said. "The only wonder is that it has not come sooner. I have feared the attack ever since the surrender of Burgoyne released the Indians from action at the north. Would that the militia were here!"

"But they have been sent for, Mrs. Green. May they not be even now on their way hither?"

"They may, child. Surely the messengers have not reached the Congress or they would have sent us aid. We will hope that the soldiers are coming. If they do not, God help us."

"That is the way Colonel Butler feels. Now what shall we do, Mrs. Green?"

"There is nothing to be done, but to await

events. But we will not talk longer. Let us go on with our daily tasks. That will keep us from being unnerved. The next hour may bring aid."

So the household went bravely about their ordinary duties, and though care sat on every brow, no one allowed the apprehensions that filled the breast to escape the lips. Thus the day passed. Sleep visited the cottage but little that night.

The east was blushing rosilily under the warm kisses of the sun when Virginia, unable to lie still longer, crept from her bed and stole softly outside. How lovely the valley looked in the radiance of the dawn! The dew lay heavy on the grass. The air was soft and balmy and fragrant with the perfume of many flowers. The fields were waving with the burden of an abundant harvest. The mountains, lofty and grand, stood like grim sentinels on guard. The golden glory of the morning softened their austerity and crowned their forbidding summits with splendor. The stillness was unbroken by man, but from every tree-top thousands of birds poured forth their matin song of praise.

The girl drank in the beauty of the scene, and her soul was uplifted by the songs of the birds.

"Why need I be afraid?" she mused. "Congress knows our danger, and will not forget us. I know that aid will come."

The thunder of a horse's hoofs broke in upon her musings. Nearer and nearer came the sound, and soon, with distended nostrils and foam-flecked flanks a horse with a man clinging to his back came dashing through the valley.

"What is it?" cried the girl in alarm as he drew near.

"The British with their Tory and Indian allies have entered the valley," shouted the man. "The Hardings were killed last night at Exeter. Get to the fort!"

He passed on, and Virginia, wild with excitement, ran back into the cottage.

"Get up, Mrs. Green! Get up, Debbie! The English and savages have come into the valley. We must go to the fort."

"What is it?" cried Mrs. Green, springing up hastily. "Is it true? Then hurry, children!"

In a short time they were ready. Johnnie, the ten-year-old boy, preceded the little party, bearing an old musket of his father's upon his shoulder. Mrs. Green with baby Willie came next, and Virginia and Debbie brought up the rear, their arms full of clothing and food. In the little village all was excitement. Men were hurrying to and fro arming to resist the foe. White-faced women with their little ones in their arms or clinging to their skirts hastened to the fort. The peaceful valley was no longer serene and calm but was a scene of wild disorder. The people, knowing how inadequate were their defenses, were filled with direst apprehensions. They huddled together like lambs in their pen while already the howls of the wolves could be heard across the fields eager for their victims.

Leaving the women and children in the fort, Col. Zebulon Butler, with his force of men and boys, marched to Exeter, but finding that Fort Jenkins, the uppermost fort of the valley, had already capitulated, returned to Fort Forty and held a consultation.

The foe did not advance further into the

valley on that day, but contented itself by demanding the surrender of the fort which was refused. For another night the attack was delayed. As the cat plays with the mouse before eating it, so the British, with their savage allies, dallied with these people, well knowing that they could crush them at any moment. On the morning of the third of July, Colonel Butler called a council of war.

"My children," he said, "we can no longer delay. I have been hoping that the militia would arrive, but they have not come. We must depend on God and ourselves. To attack the enemy and defeat it is the only hope of salvation for the settlement. We know what to expect if defeated. We must fight, not only for liberty but for life itself, and, what is dearer, to preserve our homes from conflagration; our women and children from the tomahawk. Stand firm through the first shock and the Indians will give way. Every man to his duty."

After this speech the entire force, consisting of some three hundred men—old men and boys—marched from the fort. Some of the men were grandfathers with hoary locks;

others were mere boys from fourteen to sixteen, so dire was the necessity and so urgent the need of men.

Just after they had left the fort, and marched off to meet the enemy, three men came riding up. They were Captain Durkee, Lieutenant Pierce and Sergeant Green. Mrs. Green sprang to her husband's side.

"Are the soldiers coming, Elijah?" she cried.

"No;" and the Sergeant shook his head dolefully. "They have not been given leave. We came without for the sake of our families. A few others are on the way. Give us something to eat, mother. We have ridden forty miles without pause. Give us food and we will hasten to the field."

Mrs. Green and other women plied them with viands. The men snatched a few mouthfuls and then rode after their friends and neighbors.

"Debbie," said Virginia, as the women and children grouped themselves on the banks of the river to await the issue. "Debbie, I haven't seen Aunt Jane anywhere. I don't believe that she is in the fort."

"She isn't," replied Debbie. "She ought to be here, Virginia. It will not be safe to remain outside if the British win. It may not be anyway," she added, gravely.

"I will get Aunt Jane," cried Virginia, starting up.

"But they are firing, Virginia. Listen! The battle has begun. Stay with us."

"It will be some time, Debbie, before the battle will be decided. I will be back in a short time. Perhaps she has been overlooked."

She darted out of the fort, and across the valley to the mountain at the foot of which old Jane lived. The negress was sitting in the centre of her little kitchen, her household goods piled around her.

"Aunt Jane, you must not stay here," cried Virginia. "Don't you hear the firing? The men have gone to give battle to the enemy. Come to the fort."

"And leab all dese things, chile. Old Jane nebber'll git anudder cottage laik dis hyar. Whar she gwine ter fine mo' furnichah ef dis goes? Jest tell me dat, honey."

"But you may be killed if you stay here!

What is the cottage or furniture when life is at stake? Come, aunty!"

"What's life ef you done hab nuffin' to eat, an' no place to stay, I'd laik ter know," was the old woman's retort. "Mought as well be dead as to lib widout anything."

"But the Indians, aunty?"

"Dey ain't gwine ter hurt an ole 'ooman laik me," was the answer. "Jest as safe hyar as in de foht to my way ob thinking. Marse Kunnel Butler ain't goin' to hold out agin 'em nohow. Go 'way, chile. Old Jane gwine ter stay hyar."

"Then I will stay with you," said Virginia seating herself. "I feel just about the same way. We are as safe here as anywhere."

"No; you go to de foht, chile. What Marse Pendleton do ter me ef anything habbens ter you?"

"He would not mind," said the girl sadly. "There isn't any one to care what becomes of me but Ralph and Colonel Brandon."

"I used ter know Marse Dudley Brandon. But he got nuffin' ter do with dis Kunnel Brandon I 'spect."

"It is the same one," replied Virginia, abstractedly straining her ears to listen to the shots in the distance. A hot fire seemed to be given and sustained. "I am going to be his daughter when the war is over. Oh, if he only knew he would be here!"

"You gwine ter be his daughter!" ejaculated the old woman. "How do dat happen? Marse Pendleton and Marse Brandon usen ter hate each other laik pizen. Marse Brandon had reason too. Why Marse Pendleton did an awful thing. I knows it, and he knows dat I knows it. Dat's why I kum norf. Kase he's 'fraid I'll talk. Mebbe dat I am gwine ter tell you. I 'spect you ought ter know. He ——"

"Listen!" cried Virginia, springing to her feet.

The shots had become very irregular, and in their place were shrieks and cries of agony, while high above the din and uproar came horrid savage yells. Yells that were blood curdling in their frenzy. Virginia ran out of the cottage followed by old Jane. On the opposite bank of the river was the enemy. Sir John Butler's Rangers, a detachment of Sir

John Johnson's Greens, a great number of Tories and a horde of Indians.

The settlers were flying in every direction, pursued by the merciless foe. Rifles cracked. Indians yelled. Tomahawks flew. There in sight of the waiting women and children, wives and mothers saw husbands and sons stricken down. Daughters saw white-haired fathers scalped before their eyes and the tomahawk sink into the brains of brothers whose tender years should have spared them.

Colonel Butler, Colonel Dennison and a few men were all that was left of the force that had started forth so bravely but a short time before. They hurried those of the settlers that would come into the fort. Many refused to go but fled into the mountains.

Mrs. Green stood waiting, watching every man that returned in the hope that he was her husband. She seemed incapable of moving. Debbie held little Willie while Johnnie stood with one arm thrown protectingly about his mother.

"He is not there," shrieked the unhappy woman. "Oh, children, your father is slain!"

"I will ask Colonel Butler," cried Virginia.
"He may not have come in yet."

She ran to the commander.

"Colonel Butler, is Sergeant Green with you?" she asked.

"No," returned the Colonel as a tearless sob escaped him. "He lies on the field out yonder dead. Thank Heaven, that he at least did not live for the torture."

"How can I tell them?" gasped Virginia.
"How can I go back to them?"

"Child, say to Mrs. Green that there are worse things than death. Listen to those yells, and behold those fires that are being kindled. Our friends and neighbors are even now at the stake or in other nefarious ways furnishing sport for the savages. Pray God that death may come to us all before such a fate overtakes us."

With heavy heart Virginia returned to the grief-stricken wife and imparted the sad tidings. Mrs. Green aroused herself.

"We must not stay here," she cried. "Let us go to the mountains, where we may escape the Indians. The valley is doomed. The fort cannot be held by these few men against so many."

“Colonel Butler thought we might make terms with them if the fort were surrendered,” suggested Virginia.

“Make terms with them? They are fiends in human shape who will respect no terms. Come, let us away from here. Better the wild beast of the forest than these demons.”

And so Mrs. Green and her children, Virginia and old Jane, joined the fugitives that were flying in every direction. The scene was one of confusion, consternation and horror. The only hope of safety seemed to be in flight, and the people fled singly, in pairs and in larger groups. The evening was approaching. The affrighted mother clasped her little boy to her breast. Debbie and Johnnie, one on either side, walked with her, while Virginia, who had taken old Jane under her care, brought up the rear. They began the steep ascent of the mountains on the east, hoping that they might reach Stroudsburg, where there was a small military post. Each rustling leaf filled them with terror lest a savage lurked behind it. The deep and dreary wilderness was before them. They looked back on the valley. The flames of desolation were kin-

dling. In the range of the battle-field other fires burned, bespeaking their own horrid purpose. The exulting yells of the savages filled their ears. Shrieks of agonizing woe rent the air as the pitiless Indians wreaked their vengeance upon their victims.

The night fell, throwing a veil of darkness over the harrowing scene. On and on the fugitives fled. They were hungry, as they had not eaten since morning, but there was no food. Afraid to stop and rest they wandered about, the cries of other wanderers becoming fainter and fainter. The night was almost gone when Johnnie spoke.

"Mother," he said, "let us stop for awhile. We will not be able to walk to-morrow unless we do. It is quiet here. I do not believe that there are Indians about."

"Yes, we will rest," said the poor woman sinking down under a tree. "Do not go far from me, children. Let us keep together. Virginia, are you there?"

"Yes, Mrs. Green. I am here with Jane. Come, aunty, sit down. We are all going to rest now."

"Bress de Goodness!" muttered old Jane.

"I'se mos' daid with de trottin'. Leb me hab de baby, Miss Green, you mus' be tired to def."

"No, no, Jane. I will keep him with me," returned the mother, drawing her child closer. "Let us keep near each other."

So for the remainder of the night they sought what repose they could, keeping close together, and almost fearing to breathe lest some savage foe should hear them.

At length the morning dawned. Bright, beautiful and warm, as though no frightful slaughter had taken place. The little boy began to cry piteously for food. The others were hungry, also, but bravely suppressed their longings.

"Look!" exclaimed Virginia. "I see smoke through the trees. Perhaps there is a house near, and we can get something to eat. Let us go to it."

"I know of no house so near the valley," said Mrs. Green. "I did not think that we had gone far enough over the mountain to reach a settlement."

"We walked a long way, mother," said Debbie. "Farther, perhaps, than you think."

"It may be," sighed the mother. "It will

do no harm to see, and food would refresh us."

They toiled wearily among the trees down the mountainside, and soon came out of the wilderness to the plain upon which the house stood.

"Merciful Goodness!" burst from Mrs. Green's lips. "We have come back to Wyoming!"

It was too true. In the darkness they had wandered around in a circle, and now stood once more within the fated valley.

CHAPTER XX

IN THE HANDS OF THE FOE

"WHAT shall we do?" asked Virginia.

"To go forward may mean death," replied Mrs. Green, "yet hunger, starvation and other evils await us in the forest."

"Willie so hungry," moaned the little boy. "Willie wants his breakfast."

"And Willie shall have it," said the mother with sudden resolution. "Let us go to the house and see whether friend or foe be there."

"No," said Virginia. "That is not the wisest plan. Do you stay here with the children and Aunt Jane. I will go to the door and if it be friends I will beckon you to come on. If the inmates be Indians what need is there for all to perish? If I am not back in a few moments, seek the woods again."

Before they could remonstrate the girl had darted away, and was soon at the cottage. At first there was no response to her rap, but

she continued to beat energetically upon the door.

“Who is there?” called a voice.

“A friend. One of the valley settlers. Will you not let me in?”

The chairs were pushed back, the door unlocked, and opened slowly, and a woman cautiously looked out.

“Are you alone?” she asked. “I thought it was the British. We are expecting them at any moment.”

“I have some friends at the foot of the mountain, madam,” replied the girl. “May we come in for food and rest? We fled from the valley last night but found ourselves within it again this morning.”

“Yes; tell them to come. There is plenty to eat and we might as well have it while we can. I fear that it will not be long.”

Virginia turned with gladness and waved her hands. Soon the others joined her, and entered the cottage. A mother and her daughter were the sole inmates. They placed food before the fugitives of which they partook eagerly.

“You have not gone to the fort,” said Mrs.

Green. "Do you not think it is safer there?"

"We are going in a short time," was the reply. "A messenger was sent through the valley this morning asking us to concentrate our strength at Fort Forty, but many are fleeing to the mountains. Colonel Butler and the remaining soldiers of the Continental Army left last night."

"Why?" asked Virginia in surprise. "I should not think that they would leave us."

"The British have declared that no quarter should be shown them," answered the woman. "And they were too few to help us. There is more chance of a conditional surrender being made if the soldiers are not with us. Colonel Dennison hopes that by surrendering the fort to make such terms as will enable us to return to our homes and resume our occupations."

"Then let us go to the fort," cried Mrs. Green, rising. "There seems to be more hope of life there than to face that terrible wilderness again. I thank you, madam, for your kindness. Will you not go with us?"

"No; we will stay here," said the woman,

“and join you later. There are some things that we wish to attend to before leaving.”

Once more Virginia and the others entered the fort. There were so few men that to try to hold the garrison seemed the height of folly. It had been the desire of Colonel Dennison to concentrate the strength of the whole valley at this point and resist to the end. But the measure proved impracticable because of the flight of the settlers. He now waited to surrender upon the best terms that he could make. Finally, upon the condition that no man should ever again take up arms against England, Col. John Butler, commander of the British and allies, consented to let the settlers resume their usual vocations undisturbed.

The fort capitulated, and the victorious enemy marched in with flying colors. Hope sprang into the breasts of the settlers that all might yet be well with them; but the Indians grew bolder every hour and finally throwing off all restraint proceeded to pillage and plunder the settlements.

Colonel Dennison remonstrated with the British leader against this violation of the

treaty, but he replied, "I can do nothing with them."

The savages now gave themselves up to the wildest disorder. They scattered through the valley marking their course as if in sheer wantonness by fire. After stripping a house of everything they fancied, they would leave it or set it on fire as the caprice seized them.

The hope of life which had dawned for a moment in the hearts of the settlers was extinguished. The Indians seized upon the slightest pretext for gratifying any real or fancied slight received in the past. Women and children were not exempt from their ferocity. At length, satiated with the fearful havoc which had been wrought, Col. John Butler withdrew with his Rangers. A number of Indians accompanied him, but the greater part remained to glut their appetite for blood.

It was a motley procession that filed out of the valley behind the English. Squaws to a considerable number brought up the rear. Belts of scalps stretched on small hoops were worn around their waists for girdles. Some of them had on six or more dresses of chintz

or silk, one over the other, being mounted astride on horses—all stolen,—and on their heads bonnets to the number of three or four and sometimes five, one within the other, worn wrong side before. Their grotesque appearance did not bring even a smile to the grief stricken people. Their homes were burnt. Their harvests destroyed and the whole valley swept in one great flood tide of blood. Yet even then they would have rebuilt and tried to save what they could had the Indians permitted it.

Mrs. Green, her children and Virginia had so far been fortunate enough to escape. They had lost sight of Aunt Jane and they knew not whether she were living or dead. Their home was burnt so they remained closely within the fort, and considered themselves safe while there. With the withdrawal of the British the savages became more insolent and violent. They thronged the valley, and despite the protests of Colonel Dennison set the terms of capitulation at defiance, and began their slaughter anew.

On one occasion the savages sought as usual among the people for victims. They were

preparing to leave the desolated valley and wished one more orgy before going. Mrs. Green with her children and Virginia were huddled close together in one corner of the fort hoping to escape notice. But alas! there were few who were overlooked.

One Indian snatched Baby Willie from his mother's arms, while another seized Johnnie and Debbie, and a third grabbed Virginia.

"Oh, leave my children," shrieked the unhappy mother clutching frantically at the brave who held her youngest child. "Leave them and take me!"

For answer the savage buried a tomahawk in her brain. As they hurried away an Indian seized the red man who held Virginia.

"Must not harm the pale maiden," he said briefly. "She belong to Rain-in-the-Face."

With a grunt the other reluctantly resigned the girl to him.

"Me mark you so you no come to harm," was the savage's remark, and taking a brush that was filled with black paint from his belt he smeared a streak upon her cheek.

"No take off, pale maiden," he said, "and no Indian harm you."

"Oh, Rain-in-the-Face, save Debbie, and Johnnie, and Willie," pleaded Virginia tearfully. "I don't want to live if they are all dead."

"You good to Rain-in-the-Face. He care for you. The others must die some time. Might as well be now," was the Indian's laconic response.

He led the girl to the place where he had piled the plunder belonging to him and bade her sit there until his return. She obeyed, too sick at heart to think of refusing, and presently all consciousness left her, and she fell as one dead.

When she recovered her senses she felt that she was being borne somewhere on horseback. The stars shone in the sky and the sweetness of the night air was about her. It was the breath of the mountains. There was no smell of smoke, nor light of burning cottage, nor horrid sounds of human torture to shock the ear, and craze the senses. She heaved a sigh of relief and stirred slightly.

"Pale maiden all right," said the voice of Rain-in-the-Face above her. "Sleep, for the way is long before us, and the journey wearing to the weak."

"Am I your captive?" Virginia struggled erect.

"Not captive, friend. Rain-in-the-Face take you into his own lodge. Pale maiden feel bad at first but pale faced friends are all dead and she will soon grow to love the life of the red man. The singing bird pines when caged but pours forth sweetest melodies when given its freedom. So the pale maiden will grow straight and beautiful in home of her red brother."

"No, no," cried the girl wildly. "I want my own people. I was good to you, Rain-in-the-Face. Be kind and let me go back to my people."

"Safer here," was the brief response. "Rain-in-the-Face did save maiden."

"But I don't want to be a captive," moaned Virginia in despair. "Oh, I will never see Ralph nor Colonel Brandon again! I wish I had been killed as Debbie was."

She broke into passionate weeping. The Indian rode on stolidly, paying no attention to her sorrow. The poor girl, worn and harassed by the terrible experiences of the valley, was soon completely tired out by her emotion.

Rain-in-the-Face preserved an unbroken silence and rode on hour after hour and finally Virginia fell into the slumber of exhaustion.

CHAPTER XXI

CAPTIVITY

WITH the sunrise the Indians stopped for rest and food, and then resumed their journey. Virginia was surprised to see so many captives among them. The most of them were young, half grown boys, a few girls of near her own age and a number of children. While guarding them closely to prevent escape the savages for the most part treated them humanely. On through the illimitable wilderness the Indians traveled.

The captives were wearied and faint, but their captors displayed no signs of fatigue. Virginia viewed with alarm the fact that they were getting farther and farther away from civilization. All the superstitions—the old bloody romances gotten from Indian traditions which were current in Virginia—rushed into her head. Some of these tales related to Titanic races of men ten feet high, of strange

form of life who inhabited the country on the other side of the mountains; others to great beasts which roamed the rivers seeking what they might devour. Were they going into this mysterious region, and if they were, what would befall her? Overcome by these fears she looked up timidly at Rain-in-the-Face.

“Rain-in-the-Face,” she said, “are there any mastodons where we are going?”

“Mastodons?” repeated Rain-in-the-Face, plainly puzzled.

“Yes; they are enormously large beasts that rove near the great rivers of the west. The Indians used to tell of them in Virginia.”

“Lies,” said the savage sententiously. “Pale faces very silly to believe such fables. Braves do not listen to children’s stories.”

Virginia said no more, not knowing whether the Indian spoke merely to relieve her fears, or told the truth. At nightfall of the second day the Iroquois divided their forces which consisted of Senecas and Mohawks; each tribe going to its own village. The strength of the captives was almost spent. Few were accustomed to the fatigue incident to such long journeys, and it was therefore a relief to all

when the tents of the village of the Senecas became visible.

Upon seeing them the savages whipped their horses into a dead run, emitting a series of long drawn out yells which were repeated a number of times.

“What is it?” asked the girl breathlessly. “Are they going to fight?”

Something like an approach to a smile lighted up the grim countenance of Rain-in-the-Face.

“Ugh!” he grunted. “Warriors cry to let the brothers who stayed at home and the women know how many scalps taken. Count the scalps, and listen.”

But Virginia turned shudderingly away from this gruesome pastime. The village was soon entered. It was oval in form, and was surrounded by a palisade of logs and brushwood pierced with loopholes having a platform within, supplied with stones to hurl upon the heads of the enemy should the town be attacked, and water to extinguish any fire that might be kindled from the outside. Wigwams to the number of fifty or sixty stood in rows covered with matting or thatch.

A long low lodge built of bark stood in the centre. This was the council house. The town was filled with dogs which ran yelping and barking with the old men, women and children to greet the returning warriors.

There was much rejoicing over the plunder and the captives. The latter were hurried to their respective lodges while preparations were made for the dance of thanksgiving. Virginia found herself in a tent somewhat larger than the others which from its size and ornamentation denoted Rain-in-the-Face to be one of the great men of his tribe. A squaw, very fat but agile in spite of her obesity and the wife of Rain-in-the-Face, gave her greeting. A young Indian, some few months older than herself, who was seated by the fire, looked up carelessly at her entrance. He did not speak while his mother welcomed the girl, but, as Virginia stood not knowing what to do among these strange people, he sprang to his feet and approached her with a bear-skin.

“Kinonsahquah bids you rest,” he said laying the skin at her feet.

“Thank you,” said Virginia, gratefully

sinking down upon it. "I am tired. The journey was long and wearisome."

"Kippenoquah are you," said the lad who had not ceased to look at her.

"Kippenoquah?" said the girl curiously. "What does that mean?"

"Corn tassel," was the reply. "The pale maiden is slender, and her hair is silken like the tassel of the corn. Her voice is sweet and winning even as the south wind when it sighs through the maize. Kippenoquah shall be the maiden's name."

"It is pretty," remarked Virginia gently. She was very tired and longed for rest and privacy. Privacy that she might give vent to the grief that filled her heart, yet the words of the lad touched her. He was a manly looking boy, with noble features and lofty mien. Fully as handsome as Ralph, she decided with an effort to be impartial. "And what is your name?" she asked presently.

"Kinonsahquah, which means in your language a young panther," replied the youth. "Soon Kinonsahquah shall take his fast then he too will go upon the war-path."

But Kippenoquah is weary ; her eyes are heavy."

"How do you come to speak our language so well?"

"The English fathers taught the Indian, Kippenoquah."

"I don't see how your people can be so cruel," burst from the girl with some warmth.

"You are kind to some of us, but you tear our hearts by killing and torturing our loved ones, and burn our homes. How can you treat us so?"

"Have the pale faces always treated their red brothers right?" was the quick retort.

"Who took the lands of the red man, and drove him from his home and hunting-grounds? The country was the Indian's before the white men came. Why do they not leave it to him in peace? They drive the Indian farther and farther from the great salt lake. They cheat him and speak bad of him. But Indians do not tell lies. Indians do not steal. The white men carry false looks, and deal in false actions. The cause of the Indian making war upon the settlers is just. They know it."

Virginia was somewhat awed by this outburst, and found herself unable to reply. That the Indians had wrongs had not occurred to her before. Now she recalled how the savages in her own colony were sometimes cheated in trade, and how they were regarded as so much vermin to be gotten rid of. She could not but acknowledge the justice of the words of the boy, and it was with a softened voice that she said :

“Kinonsahquah,” speaking the name with difficulty, “you are right. We have not treated the Indians with fairness. Yet when our hearts are desolated by the loss of kindred and friends and our homes burned, we do not stop to think of justice.”

“True, Kippenoquah. The heart then is incapable of aught save vengeance. But there is no strife betwixt Kinonsahquah and Kippenoquah. My father hath brought the pale maiden to his lodge. Henceforth she is of our blood and flesh of our flesh. She shall be used tenderly and kindly that she may dwell in content with us.”

The tears came into the girl's eyes.

“I don't want to be of your race. I want

my own people. Would you not long for the forest, and for your father and mother should the white man take you prisoner?"

"It is different with men," was the reply. "Men pine unless they can roam the forest either on the war-path or in search of food for their families. Women always stay in the wigwam whether it be the lodge of the red man, or the house of his white brother. Therefore will Kippenoquah soon become accustomed to the tent. In our tribe there lives a woman of the pale faces. For ten winters she has been in the village. Now she dwells in the lodge of her husband, an Indian brave, and there be none of the squaws of our own people more happy than she with her husband and papooses. To-morrow the pale maiden shall see her. She too grieved when first she came, but now she would not leave the Indians if she could."

"She is disloyal to her race," cried the girl excitedly. "I will never become like that. Never! Never!"

She broke into a passion of tears. The lad arose and covered her with a blanket.

"Sleep, Kippenoquah," he said softly.

“Time is the great healer of sorrow like yours. Soon will the pale maiden be the singing bird of the lodge. It is even now brighter for her coming.” He went out leaving the girl alone.

Virginia gave way to a paroxysm of weeping. Would she never see Ralph again? Oh, if Colonel Brandon only knew that she were a captive she was sure that he would come to her rescue. Yet how could he find her in the trackless forest through which they had come? Would it be with her as it had been with this other maiden? Had she no future but to stay among savages with some one of them for a husband? Her blood curdled at the thought.

But soon her grief spent itself and when Nadowaqua, the wife of Rain-in-the-Face, re-entered the wigwam she was calm. With the days that followed a new life began which, though novel and strange, was not without charm. Nadowaqua taught her to make mats of platted straw, flags and rushes; to fix long poles in the ground, bending them toward each other at the top for the wigwams, and to cover them with bark or skins; to soften and dye the inner barks of certain trees for

ornamentation ; to weave baskets of osier, cane and splints so firmly that water could be carried in them.

The winter came on apace. Virginia tried to adapt herself to her surroundings, and to be reconciled to the inevitable. The captives had been kept apart through the summer and had been allowed no communication with each other. Now that the cold weather precluded all chance of escape they were permitted to mingle freely together. Virginia found them seemingly resigned to their fate, and she chid herself unsparingly that she, who had no kinsmen to mourn her loss, should be so unsatisfied.

“ Every one of them has loved ones save myself,” she thought. “ Why therefore do I pine for freedom when they dwell content? But, oh, for the sight of a white face ! ” The evenings of the winter days were the one enjoyable feature of her captivity. Then the warriors, women and children would gather about the camp-fire and listen to the old men as they related weird and poetic tales.

“ Owaynee (the Creator) ran one of the traditions, after making them from handfuls of

red seeds, assembled his children together and said: 'Ye are five nations, for ye sprang from the different handfuls of the seed I have sown; but ye are all brethren, and I am your father. Mohawks, I have made you bold and valiant; and see, I give you corn for your food. Oneidas, I have made you patient of pain and hunger; the nuts and the fruits of the trees are yours. Senecas, I have made you industrious and active; beans do I give you for your nourishment. Cayugas, I have made you strong, friendly and generous; ground-nuts and every generous fruit shall refresh you. Onondagos, I have made you wise, just and eloquent; squashes and grapes have I given you to eat, and tobacco to smoke in council. The beasts, birds and fishes I have given to you all in common. Be just to all men, and kind to strangers that come among you.' "

"Why did you not tell me some of the stories of the tribe through the long summer days?" asked Virginia of Kinonsahquah one evening as they sat by the camp-fire.

"Because, Kippenoquah, there are evil spirits in the land. They listen when men

talk in the camp, or breathe confidences in the woods, and carry news to those with whom it would make the most mischief. So it is for that reason that the red men wait until such spirits are fast asleep under a white blanket of snow. Then when the rivers and lakes are frozen so that they cannot fish and the snow has drifted so that they cannot hunt, and the north wind blows sharp in their faces, cutting them with his spears of ice and arrows of snow, then the red men go into their wigwams and wrapping their heaviest bearskins around them, they crouch by the fire and listen to Iagoo the story-teller. Kinonsahquah will tell Kippenoquah of the beautiful star maiden, if she cares to hear."

"Yes, yes," said the girl eagerly. "Tell me of her."

"The red men of our tribe have always looked well after the interests of the good spirits," began Kinonsahquah. "They stepped aside when flowers were in their path. When the chase was over they sat in the doorways of their wigwams smoking, and as they watched the blue circles drift and fade away into the darkness of the evening, they listened

to the voices of the spirits and the insects hum and the thousand tiny noises that night always brings.

“One night as they were listening they saw a bright light shining in the tops of the tallest trees. It was a star brighter than all the others, and it seemed very close to the earth. When they went close to the tree they found that it was really caught in the topmost branches.

“The wise men of the tribe were summoned and for three nights they sat about the council fire, but they came to no conclusion about the beautiful star. At last one of the young warriors went to them and told them that the truth had come to him in a dream.

“While asleep the west wind had lifted the curtains of his wigwam and the light of the star fell full upon him. Suddenly a beautiful maiden stood at his side. She smiled upon him, and as he gazed speechless she told him that her home was in the star and that in wandering over all the earth she had seen no land so fair as the land of his tribe. Its flowers, its sweet-voiced birds, its rivers, its beautiful lakes, the mountains

clothed in green, these had charmed her, and she wished to be no more a wanderer. If they would welcome her she would make her home among them, and she asked them to choose a place in which she might dwell.

“The council were greatly pleased; but they could not agree upon what was best to offer the star maiden, so they decided to ask her to choose for herself.

“She searched first among the flowers of the prairie. There she found the fairies’ ring, where the little spirits danced on moonlight nights. ‘Here,’ thought she, ‘I will rest.’ But as she swung herself backward and forward on the stem of a lovely blossom, she heard a terrible noise and fled in great fear. A vast herd of buffaloes came and took possession of the ring, where they rolled over one another, and bellowed so that they could be heard far on the trail. No gentle star maiden could choose such a resting-place.

“She next sought the mountain rose. It was cool and pleasant, the moss was soft to her dainty feet, and she could talk to the spirits she loved, whose homes were in the stars. But the mountain was steep, and huge

rocks hid from her view the nation that she loved.

“She was almost in despair, when one day as she looked down from the edge of the wild rose leaf she saw a white flower with a heart of gold shining on the waters of the lake below her. As she looked a canoe steered by the young warrior who had told her wishes to his people, shot past, and his strong brown hand brushed the edge of the flower.

“‘That is the home for me,’ she cried, and half skipping, half flying down the side of the mountain, she quickly made her way to the flower and hid herself in its bosom. There she could watch the stars, as well as when she looked upward from the cup of the mountain rose; there she could talk to the star spirits, for they bathed in the clear lake; and best of all, there she could watch the people whom she loved, for their canoes were always upon the water.”

“It is a beautiful story,” said Virginia charmed by the poetic fancy.

“Is it not? Kippenoquah is like the star maiden. She has tried vainly to find a place where she might be content but none has

suited. Kinonsahquah enters upon his fast with the coming summer. Then will he go upon the war-path, and build him a lodge of his own. Then will he slay the red deer and bring it to the feet of Kippenoquah. In his lodge, like the star maiden in the water blossom, she will find the content she seeks."

CHAPTER XXII

FREEDOM AT LAST

It was a hard winter. The snow drifted long and deep about the lodges, but the Indians drew the curtains closer, and huddled nearer the fire while they talked of the coming of the sugar moon, or related deeds of daring and prowess. At last the birds and the blossoms came. With the coming of the summer Kinonsahquah prepared to absent himself from the village for the purpose of entering upon the fast which was enjoined upon all Indian youths of his age. Seventeen snows had passed over his head and he had grown tall and manly.

“Would that I might dream of something that would bring good to my people,” he said to Virginia the night before he was to leave.

“To dream?” Virginia looked up at him. “Do you dream when you fast, Kinonsahquah?”

“Yes, Kippenoquah. It was through the dream of a youth while fasting that Maize was given to the Indians.”

“Tell me of it,” pleaded the girl, ever eager to hear more of these fanciful traditions.

“There was once a youth who was about to enter upon his fast,” commenced Kinon-sahquah immediately, who seemed to find as much enjoyment in telling the legends as the maiden did in hearing them. “He had often thought of the goodness of the Great Spirit in providing all kinds of fruits and herbs for the use of his children, and he earnestly prayed that he might dream of something that would bring good to his people, for he had sometimes seen them suffering for the want of food.

“For three days he fasted and then became too weak to walk about, so he kept his bed. He fancied, while thus lying, that he saw a handsome young man dressed in green robes with green plumes on his head advancing toward him. The visitor said: ‘I am sent to you by the Great Spirit who made all things. He sees that you desire to procure a benefit for your people. Listen to my words and follow my instructions. Rise and wrestle

with me.' Weak as the youth was he tottered to his feet and began. After a long trial, the stranger said: 'It is enough for once. I will come again.'

"On the next day he came again and renewed the trial. The youth knew that his strength was less than the day before, but his mind was stronger and clearer. Perceiving this, the plumed stranger again spoke to him. 'To-morrow will be your last trial. Be strong and courageous; it is the way to obtain the boon you seek.'

"On the sixth day, as the faster lay on his blanket weak and exhausted, the pleasing visitor returned, and as he renewed the contest he looked more beautiful than ever. The youth grasped him and seemed to feel new strength imparted to his body while that of the visitor grew weaker.

"At length the stranger cried out: 'It is enough; I am beaten. To-morrow will be the seventh day of your fast and the last of your trials. Your father will bring you food which will refresh you. I shall then visit you for the last time. As soon as you have thrown me down, strip off my garments and

bury me on the spot. Visit the place and keep the earth clean and soft. Let no weeds grow there. I shall soon come to life, and re-appear with all the wrappings of my garments and my waving plumes. Once every moon cover my roots with fresh earth.' He then disappeared.

"Next day the youth's father came with food, but he set it by until the sun went down. When the sky visitor came he engaged in the combat with him with a feeling of great strength although he had not yet partaken of food. He threw him down. Stripping off his garments and plumes he buried him in the earth, carefully preparing the ground and removing every weed. He then returned to his father's lodge.

"He soon regained his strength but he never forgot the burial-place of his friend. He frequently visited it, and would not let even a wild-flower grow there. Soon he saw the tops of the green plumes coming out of the ground, at first in points, then growing into broad leaves and rising in green stalks, and finally assuming their silken fringes and yellow tassels.

“Spring and summer had passed when one day he took his father to the lonely spot where he had fasted. The old man stood amazed. There grew a tall, majestic plant, waving its taper leaves and displaying its bright-colored plumes and tassels. But what most excited his admiration was its cluster of golden ears. ‘It is the friend of my dreams and visions,’ said the youth.

“‘It is Mondamin; it is the spirit’s grain,’ said the father; and thus it was that Maize came to the Indians. Oh, Kippenoquah, would that such dreams would come to Kinonsahquah in his fast!”

“Perhaps they will,” replied the girl, moved by his earnestness. “You are so good, Kinonsahquah. If they come to any one surely they will come to you.”

But if the lad had visions he revealed the fact to no one. He returned from his fast, and resumed his daily occupations. He was now considered mature enough for the war-path and only awaited an opportunity to enter upon it, that he might earn the feather of the war eagle for his hair, and boast of his exploits in the great war-dance and feast of his band.

The village was situated upon the upper banks of the Susquehanna. During the spring months the river frequently overflowed its banks and the Indians were always prepared for the inundation. That it should rise in August was an unheard-of catastrophe, but this was what happened in the mid-summer. In great consternation the savages held a council, but their wise men were unable to assign a cause for the phenomenon.

"The Great Spirit is angry with his children," said they. "His hand is raised against them."

One morning Virginia sat by the entrance of the lodge idly watching some children at play. She was startled presently by a great commotion among the Indians. Men, women and children ran to and fro in wild excitement. She watched them curiously, wondering what could be the cause of the confusion. All at once Kinonsahquah ran to her side and caught her by the hand.

"Come, Kippenoquah," he cried. "The waters are coming upon us. We must away if we would escape."

"The waters!" Virginia gave a quick

glance at the river. It had indeed risen perceptibly in the past few hours, and was still rising. "Is there danger, Kinonsahquah?"

"Great danger," answered the lad quickening his stride. "A runner from the upper valley has just come to tell us that all the villages there are swept away by the flood. So we go to Newtown where our English father has gathered the braves to fight the Yankees."

Virginia hastened with him to the outskirts of the village where a number of the inhabitants were grouped together. The women and children were placed in the wagons while the braves mounted horses, and the procession marched rapidly from the town. It was none too soon. They had proceeded but a short distance when the roaring, seething waters burst their boundaries, engulfed the village, and swept onward destroying everything in their track.

Virginia was perplexed. It seemed a mysterious thing to her that the flood should have come in such a dry season of the year, and she could not but wonder if it were truly a visitation of divine wrath as the Indians

believed. It was not until some time afterward that she learned the true cause of the event.

Gen. James Clinton with a New York brigade wished to join General Sullivan who had command of an enterprise against the savages. General Sullivan was at Tioga in upper Wyoming Valley, and in order to expedite the junction of their forces, General Clinton crossed from the Mohawk to Lake Otsego, dammed the lake, and so raised its level, and then by breaking away the dam produced an artificial flood by the aid of which the boats were carried rapidly down the northeast branch of the Susquehanna to Sullivan. The waters also carried devastation and destruction to all the Indian villages along the banks of the river.

Rejoicing over their escape the Senecas proceeded to Newtown, now Elmira, on the Chemung River, where Col. John Butler with his British regulars, a number of Tories, and a large body of Indians under Joseph Brant, the Mohawk chief, had centred his forces.

The position was naturally a strong one. The forces occupied a steep ridge running

between a creek and the river, a bend in which protected two of its sides, while a breast-work partly hidden by the trees strengthened its front.

The band of Senecas followed by their squaws was loudly welcomed by the garrison. Virginia could not repress a shudder as she saw Col. John Butler, for he was associated in her mind with the terrible massacre of the Wyoming settlers. Garbed as she was in the native costume she passed for a time unnoticed. At length Colonel Butler was struck by her beauty and delicacy.

“Who is yon maiden, Rain-in-the-Face?” he asked of the brave who stood near him. “She looks not to belong to your people yet she wears your dress.”

“She is not of my people,” was the reply. “She is a maiden of the pale faces. A captive from Wyoming. Rain-in-the-Face saved her for the wife of his son, Kinonsahquah.”

“A maiden of the pale faces.” The Colonel eyed her attentively. “She is truly a pale maiden, Rain-in-the-Face. The name suits her. Kinonsahquah is a fine lad, yet methinks she does not look overjoyed at the

prospect before her. By your leave I will speak to her."

Without waiting for permission he approached the maiden.

"Rain-in-the-Face informs me that you are one of the captives taken from Wyoming," he said. "To me you look ill and unhappy. If so be it please you I will ransom you from your captivity. Methinks that we could find a youth of the British that would be better suited for a husband than Kinonsahquah. His father says that you are destined for his wife."

For one instant the girl regarded him in silence; then, rising to her full height, she poured forth all the indignation of her young nature.

"Be ransomed by you?" she cried with so much scorn that the officer winced. "Be ransomed by the man who was instrumental in making my captivity! A man who incited the savages to attack a defenseless people! The Indians but followed the leadings of their nature and have wrongs to revenge. You, sir, were an Englishman and our brother. What excuse can you give?"

"In war, my young lady of the peppery tongue, all things are justifiable," answered the Colonel wrathfully. "I should not think a white girl would want to be the wife of any Indian brave. I offered you a better fate than that."

"You offered an Englishman," said the girl hotly. "Let me tell you, sir, that I prefer the fate destined for me to the one you proffer. Kinonsahquah's hands are at least clear of his brothers' blood."

"You rebels deserve everything that you get," cried the Colonel stung by her words and her contempt. "If I had my way I would hang Washington and the whole lot of you."

"There is nothing to prevent," said the girl quietly, "save catching us. I have heard others of your countrymen express the same wish. Unfortunately they do not seem to have discovered how to catch our great leader."

"Hang him," was the exasperated exclamation of the British commander. Virginia was delighted. She knew by this ejaculation that as yet all was well with the commander-in-

chief, and it had been so long since she had heard. So long!

"I offered you freedom because I felt pity for you," went on the exasperated officer. "Now I leave you to your fate without compunction."

Turning on his heel he strode away and later the girl saw him placing his men for the attack which was expected momentarily from the Americans. Congress had committed the task of breaking the power of the savages to Gen. John Sullivan, who for the protection of the western frontier, had carried the war into central New York and western Pennsylvania. He had already dealt several sharp blows to the enemy which was the reason for the rally of the Indians by Col. John Butler who hoped to give him such a severe repulse that he would be unable to proceed further.

Colonel Butler took advantage of his strong position to lay an ambush. He supposed that the advancing Americans would march along the base of the ridge, by an open path parallel with the breastworks, and the intention was that when their flank was completely exposed,

a deadly fire should be opened upon them from the heights above.

A rifleman, however, belonging to the American advance guard discovered the entire line of the enemy from the top of a tree, and thus rendered their skilfully laid plans abortive.

The battle was opened by a brigade of the Americans which occupied the enemy in front while two other brigades made their way through woods and swamps to strike the enemy's rear and flank. The artillery opened upon the breastworks at the same time that the Americans marched up the hill, shouting "Remember Wyoming!"

The fight was desperate. The Indians, urged on by Brant, outgeneraled and outnumbered, nevertheless fought with great obstinacy, yielding the ground inch by inch, and being frequently driven from their hiding-places at the point of the bayonet. Finding themselves at length in danger of being surrounded, their leader uttered the Indian cry of retreat: "Oonah! Oonah!" And the savages scattered in every direction.

Virginia had been placed in one of the tents

where the squaws were to remain until after the battle. Impelled by an irresistible fascination, she had drawn closer and closer to the door, and stood there watching the Indians anxiously. Presently she heard the cry of the advancing Americans: "Remember Wyoming! Remember Wyoming!" A great wave of joy swept over her. It was friends. Her own people! With a cry she darted from the tent oblivious of the whizzing bullets.

"Kippenoquah! Kippenoquah!" cried Nadowaqua springing after her. "The bullets of the Yankees are swift and sure. There is danger without."

She dragged the girl back into the wigwam. Curbing her impatience Virginia tried to wait the issue calmly, a great hope flooding her heart. Oh, that the Americans might be successful! Her own people! Let them be ever so strange they would still be of her own blood. With clasped hands and bowed head she sat praying earnestly for the success of her brothers.

"Oonah! Oonah!" sounded the cry of retreat. Instantly all was confusion in the wigwams. The squaws stood not upon the

order of their going but fled precipitately, leaving the girl alone in the tent. For a time Virginia sat still; then thinking that the Indians had all gone she rose and ran out of the lodge. On every side were the flying savages. The Americans had conquered. Full of a great thankfulness she ran in the direction of the advancing soldiers without thought of danger. She had gone but a short distance when she was seized violently by the hair. The shock threw her upon her knees. Looking up in terror she beheld Kinonsahquah, his eyes blazing, his tomahawk raised high above his head.

“Kinonsahquah! Kinonsahquah! would you kill me?” she cried in horror.

“Kippenoquah no fall in the hands of Yankees,” cried the lad brandishing his weapon. “Kinonsahquah slay her first.”

“No, no,” shrieked the girl wildly. Life had become sweet now that a tantalizing glimpse of freedom had been vouchsafed her. “No, Kinonsahquah!” She clasped his arm pleadingly. “Spare me! Spare me!”

For a moment the stern features of the lad softened as he met her beseeching gaze, but

the weakness lasted but a moment. The shouts of the victorious Americans fell upon his ears, and a look of malignity came over his face. Casting off the clinging hands of the girl he raised his weapon again. Virginia thought that her last hour had come, and closing her eyes she resigned herself to her fate.

“You savage fiend!” yelled a voice of fury and the girl felt herself torn from the grasp of the youth just as the blow fell. The sharp edge of the hatchet grazed her shoulder slightly. She opened her eyes just in time to see the gun of her rescuer leveled at the boy.

“Don’t shoot!” she cried starting up. With a quick movement she knocked the gun upward just as it was discharged.

“You’ve spoiled my aim finely,” ejaculated the man turning to her savagely. “Why did you —— Why it’s Virginia!”

“Colonel Brandon!” screamed the girl bounding to him. “Oh, I didn’t know that it was you!”

She clung to him joyfully, laughing and crying alternately.

“Little one, I thought you were dead.”

The Colonel caressed her tenderly. "I never expected to see you again. How did you come here?"

"It's a long story," answered Virginia. "Is Ralph with you?"

"No; he is still with General Washington. I came to Wyoming with the company when I heard of your peril. When we reached there the whole valley was naught but a scene of desolation. I was told that you were killed. I then joined General Sullivan's forces in their raid upon the Indians, for I, in common with other Americans, wanted vengeance. But how did you escape? Where have you been this long time?"

"Kinonsahquah," began Virginia and then looked around for the lad. The youth had folded his arms when the maiden was torn from his grasp, and stood with stoical indifference waiting to receive the bullet aimed at him by Colonel Brandon. When Virginia had knocked the gun so that the bullet flew wide of the mark a light came over his face, and he turned toward her with a quick gesture of yearning. But she had not seen him. She was so overjoyed at being with

Colonel Brandon again that all thoughts of the lad had gone from her mind. The boy stood for a second—a jealous witness of her joy—then turning on his heel strode into the forest unmindful of the surrounding foe.

“Tell me all, little girl,” and the Colonel drew Virginia to one side, for the victorious Americans were ravaging the village. “Begin at the first and tell me everything.”

So Virginia told him her story. Her tears flowed fast as she related the deaths of Sergeant Green and his family. She dwelt at length upon the kindness of Rain-in-the-Face, Nadowaqua and particularly of Kinon-sahquah.

“I cannot think what could have changed him,” she concluded sadly. “He was always so kind and gentle to me, Colonel Brandon. Why should he want to kill me?”

“It was because he could not bear the thought of losing you,” replied Colonel Brandon. “Indians always kill their captives rather than have them rescued. I am glad that you spoiled my aim since he was so good to you. I confess that I was provoked at the time.”

"I ought to have been happy with them, they were so kind," said Virginia. "But I could not be satisfied. I wanted my own people. I do care for them, and I shall always regard the Indians with affection after this. I wish that Ralph could know Kinon-sahquah."

"I think that it is just as well that he cannot," replied the Colonel dryly. "Now, little one, we will rest here for a few days and then I will take you to Virginia."

"Virginia! Oh, Colonel Brandon, am I really to go back to Virginia?"

"Yes, child. I do not know what else to do with you. You cannot go with us in our pursuit of the Indians, and I am not going to run any more chances with you on the frontier. I will take you to my own plantation, though it will be very lonesome for you there with no one but the darkies."

"Why couldn't I go to Polly Daniel's and stay with her until the war is over?"

"The very thing! Dear me, what a time you two will have talking! You are quite a young lady of experience, Virginia."

Virginia's laugh rang out so gaily that it

startled herself. She looked up at him with an apologetic air.

"It is dreadful in me to be so happy when there is death and the horror of war all about me," she said. "But I am so happy. So happy to be with you again, and to have my freedom that I cannot help it."

"Laugh, child, and be merry while you can. The sorrow that you have undergone calls for some moments of pleasure."

In a few days General Sullivan moved his forces westward to strike further blows at the savages while Virginia and Colonel Brandon turned their faces toward their far-away home. The girl could scarcely contain herself at the knowledge that at last she was really going to Virginia.

"It seems so long since I was there," she said, smiling brightly at the Colonel, as she rode by his side.

"I expect that it does seem so," smiled Colonel Brandon. "It has been a long time even since you left me for Wyoming."

"Yes." A shadow fell over the girl's face as the thought of Debbie came to her. "Colonel Brandon," she said, presently, "while you

were in Wyoming did you hear anything of a negress called Jane?"

"No, I think not." The Colonel considered a moment. "I am sure not, little one. Why?"

"There was one there who seemed to know you and Uncle Ralph too."

"To know me and Ralph Pendleton also? That is very strange! What did she say about us? I do not remember any Jane."

"She did not like Uncle Ralph, and she knew that you two were enemies. Let me see! On the day of the battle at Wyoming I was urging her to go to the fort. I forget how it came about, but she was speaking of Uncle Ralph. She said that she was sent north to keep her from talking. That she expected that I ought to know why. Then she began to tell me something about him. Just then there came such shrieks and cries that we ran to see what was the matter. I did not think of it in the awful time that followed, but during the months of my captivity, I often wondered what she was about to tell."

"Was she killed, Virginia?" The Colonel had listened to her words attentively.

"I do not know. After the fort surrendered I did not see her again."

"This might lead to a clue to your parentage, Virginia," said the Colonel, thoughtfully.

The girl reined in her horse so abruptly that she almost threw him on his haunches.

"Why didn't I think of that?" she cried. "Oh, I fear that I have missed a great opportunity. There was so much time before the massacre. I was at her house so often! It would have been easy to have asked her."

"Perhaps she would not have told you, Virginia. The fear of what might befall her was the cause, I suspect, of her saying what she did. At any other time she might have been more guarded in her speech."

Virginia rode on soberly, reviewing all the conversation that she had had with the negress. Finally she sighed deeply.

"Fate seems to be against my ever knowing who I am. I am sixteen and I do not know my name. Fatherless, motherless, homeless; I should have contented myself with the Indians." She caught her breath quickly.

"Fatherless, homeless? Nonsense!" The Colonel spoke gruffly to hide his emotion.

"I thought that we were to adopt each other. I am a poor sort of a father, little one, but such as I am I will be yours, if you will have me. And while Dudley Brandon lives you shall never be homeless."

"I was wrong to speak so," said the girl, contritely. "I know that we adopted each other, Colonel Brandon, but I fear that you will repent the matter if I speak so bitterly again. I do not deserve your kindness."

"It is all right, little one. I do not wonder that you speak so. The only marvel is that it has not embittered you past redemption."

The long, fatiguing journey was at last ended.

"There are the chimneys of Pine Grove now," said the Colonel. "Whip up your horse, Virginia. A few moments and you shall see Polly."

Virginia needed no urging. She made her horse fairly fly over the intervening distance.

"Polly, Polly," she screamed as the Squire, Mrs. Daniel and Polly came to the door to welcome them.

"Why it's Virginia," exclaimed Polly in amazement. "Where did you come from?"

We've been hearing the most dreadful things about you ! You dear, dear thing !”

The girls embraced rapturously. The Squire, his wife and the Colonel watched them smilingly.

“ Oh, Polly,” gasped Virginia presently, “ I've been a prisoner among the Indians.”

“ Virginia Pendleton, you haven't !”

“ And I saw General Washington ——”

“ Joe has gone to the army, and ——”

“ And Uncle Ralph is so angry ——”

“ Oh, you dear !” Their arms were about each other again. “ Come right up to my room, and tell me all about it,” cried Polly finally.

The girls went off, their arms entwined about each other's waists, both of them talking at once.

“ There !” said the Squire drawing a long breath. “ They've gone now, and we won't see anything more of them until supper time. Come in, Colonel, and enlighten us as to the young lady's adventures. I would like to talk matters over anyway. When have you heard from General Washington ?”

CHAPTER XXIII

VIRGINIA TAKES MATTERS INTO HER OWN HANDS

MONTH followed month in rapid succession, and to Virginia though uneventful, the days were happy ones. She and Polly worked industriously making shirts and knitting socks, for now that Ralph and Joe were both in the army the girls felt a great interest in all soldiers.

The fall of 1780 found the Americans full of gloom and despondency. Never had the cause been in a more desperate condition. The treason of Benedict Arnold had fallen upon the country like a thunderclap from a clear sky, filling the boldest hearts with consternation. If this man, who had been an ardent patriot, would betray them, who then could be trusted? The country from North to South was in despair. The entire resources seemed to have been drained from it,

and the bravest men began to ask themselves if it were worth while to continue the struggle. The army was in a wretched condition; the men were poorly clothed, badly fed, and worse paid, some of them not having received any money for nearly twelve months. Encouraged by Arnold's treachery, the British began to circulate among them offers of money and bribes of other things if they would desert the patriots' cause. It was indeed a dark hour for the colonies. The state of Virginia had nearly exhausted all her resources in furnishing men and supplies, but still the planters sowed the grain for the harvests. The women and girls wove cloth and spun yarn, and made the fabric into garments and the yarn into socks for the soldiers. The people felt that the crisis was approaching, and that another year would decide the contest one way or the other.

Virginia and Polly sat discussing the matter one gray November day as they were busily sewing.

"I should think that you would find sewing very tame, Virginia," remarked Polly abruptly changing the subject. "It seems to

me that if I had been through the experiences that you have I should set myself up for a heroine and never do anything more."

Virginia laughed at the idea, and then replied gravely :

"No, you wouldn't, Polly. You would be glad to find a place where you could sit and work without fear. It seems to me that I am years and years older than I was when the war began. Just think how we urged the boys to join the army and now what times they are having. It has been a long, long struggle."

"Yes, it has. I wish Joe could be at home, but I know that he would not be contented to stay until the cause of the colonies is decided. I wish that it were all over."

They sewed on without speaking for a time, each intent upon her own thoughts; then Polly said suddenly,

"Virginia, do you suppose that your uncle will ever forgive you for running away from him?"

"I don't know, Polly. I have often wondered if I would ever see him again, and if so, how he would treat me. I long to be friends

with him. Uncle Ralph was fond of me before the colonies revolted. But after Ralph left he disliked me intensely. Colonel Brandon says that I need not see any of them again unless I wish. He is going to make Uncle Ralph tell him all about my parents when he sees him."

"Colonel Brandon is good to you, isn't he? But then I don't see how he can help it. Every one likes you, Virginia."

"Mrs. Pendleton doesn't, nor Evelyn," replied Virginia. "Perhaps they know my faults better than you do, Polly."

"You haven't any," retorted Polly indignantly. "If Mrs. Pendleton and Evelyn, and your uncle too, had treated me as they have you I should hate them. So there!"

"I couldn't do that, Polly. Uncle Ralph especially. I remember too many of his kindnesses. Often when he used to bring something home for Evelyn and me he would give me the larger and better of whatever it was. I think that was why Evelyn did not like me. For a time, after he had threatened to give me into Cunningham's hands, I felt

that I could never forgive him, but I don't feel hard toward him any more."

"I am glad to hear you say that, Virginia." The Squire had entered the room in time to hear the last remark, and now came to her side.

Virginia looked up at him quickly, struck by the gravity of his tone.

"Squire Daniel, you have something to tell me," she exclaimed. "What has happened to Uncle Ralph?"

"Don't get excited, child. There is no need. Everything is going to come out all right."

"But what is it?" Virginia had risen and stood with clasped hands awaiting his tidings.

"I met Dr. Hunt in Richmond town just now, and he told me that the Colonel returned to look after some business a few days since, and had been taken down with the fever. His wife and Evelyn are not with him."

"Then I must go to him," cried Virginia in great agitation.

"No, Virginia, you must not," spoke up

Polly. "Tell her, father, that she must not."

"On the contrary," said the Squire, "I shall tell her that it is right for her to go. I am glad that she feels so."

"But what if she should take the fever," and Polly burst into tears. "Why don't they send for Mrs. Pendleton? He has treated Virginia too mean for her to go to him."

"Polly, I am ashamed of you," said her father sternly. "Mrs. Pendleton is in New York. It will take some days for her to come to him."

"Don't scold her, Squire." Virginia put her arms about Polly and gave her a good squeeze. "She would do the same thing if she were in my place. She just doesn't like me to leave her. Will you have my horse brought round, please, Squire? I would like to go to Forrest Hall at once."

"I ordered it before I came to you," replied the Squire. "You see that I felt sure of what you would do. Tell Polly good-bye and we will start at once."

Virginia bade her friend adieu, and then set forth with the Squire for Forrest Hall.

Though she had been in its vicinity for so long she had not visited it. She felt a delicacy in going upon its premises as long as she was in disfavor with the family. Now as the old familiar outlines came into view her heart swelled and the tears rose to her eyes.

Mammy Began stood on the portico as they rode up. She stared at them for a moment and then rushed toward them with a cry of delight.

"Law! ef it ain't Miss Virgie," she cried folding the girl in a capacious embrace. "Kum ter your mammy, chile. Whar you bin all dis long time? Mercy knows I'se glad ter see yer!"

"And so am I to see you, mammy," replied Virginia kissing the black face joyfully. "I began to fear that I was never going to see my old mammy again."

"Yer kum mighty nigh it too; stayin' away dis long while. We's in de awfulest fix, Miss Virgie, dat you ebber did see. Marse Kunnel done kum home sick, and nobody hyar but us blacks. We dunno what ter do. De missus ain't hyar, ner Miss Evelyn eider."

"Well, I've come to stay until they do

come, mammy. Now take me to Uncle Ralph. Is he delirious?"

"No'm; not 'zactly 'lirious." Mammy Began's face brightened as she caught the import of the words. "Dat is, sumtimes 'e goes outen his haid. Tillie she's bin dozin' him, an' de doctah left sum stuff, but nuffin' done 'pear to do him no good."

They had reached Colonel Pendleton's bedroom by this time. Virginia's heart misgave her as they reached the door, and she hesitated.

"Be brave, my child," whispered the Squire. "I will stay within call."

She gave him a look of gratitude and then went into the room. Colonel Pendleton lay with his back toward the entrance. He turned eagerly as the door opened.

"Is that you, Ralph?" he asked querulously.

"No, Uncle Ralph; it is I. Don't you know me? I am Virginia."

"Virginia!" A puzzled look crossed the sick man's face. "Virginia! No; Virginia has left me."

"No; she is here, and she is going to stay

with you until you get well." Virginia stroked his feverish brow tenderly. "Your head is hot, Uncle Ralph. Let me bathe it for you, and perhaps you can sleep."

"Don't go away." He caught her wrist as she started from the bed. "Don't leave me."

"I won't, uncle." The girl resumed her place at his side, and again began to stroke his brow. Her touch seemed to soothe him. He kept fast hold of her hand, and at last dropped into a troubled sleep. The Squire becoming alarmed at the quietness of the room opened the door softly, and crept noiselessly in. Virginia whispered to him how her uncle had greeted her.

"He wants me," she said with tears in her eyes. "I am so glad that I came."

"I will send Martha to stay in the room with you. Is there anything I can do?"

"There is nothing." Virginia looked troubled as she gazed at her uncle. "Do you think that he is very ill?"

"He is a pretty sick man, my child. The doctor will come again soon. Mrs. Pendleton ought to be here. It is a heavy responsibility for you. Are you equal to it?"

"I think so. I will do the best I can."

"Angels can do no more. Well, I will leave you, Virginia. I will send to Mrs. Pendleton my fleetest messenger. If you need me, send one of the darkies for me. I will be back soon anyway."

The Squire left the room. Virginia remained by her uncle's side. She hoped that he would be in his right mind when he had finished his sleep, but he awoke only to go into delirium.

"I can do no more," said the doctor some days later when this delirium had passed into a stupor. "I have bled him, and physiced him to the limit of my power. He is in God's hands. We must let the matter rest with Him."

"Doctor," said Virginia timidly, "when I was among the Indians I frequently saw them put fever patients into what they called sweating ovens. They were kept there until they had perspired freely, and then dipped in cold water. There were some wonderful cures wrought, and some of the patients were as sick as Uncle Ralph is."

"Nonsense! Don't tell me any such fool-

ishness. If bleeding won't do a man any good rest assured that nothing will. Ralph Pendleton's time has come. That's all there is about it!"

Virginia said no more. She knew that she ought to accept the doctor's decision as final, and yet the idea of trying the Indians' treatment came again and again to her. She brooded over it constantly.

"It might cure Uncle Ralph, and yet if it shouldn't! It might hasten his death. If it did I could never forgive myself for trying it. But still, but still! If it cured others why wouldn't it cure him?"

Thus she mused. There was no change for the better in the Colonel's condition and then the girl made up her mind to try the treatment. With determined mien she set about the execution of her design. She knew that in such a proceeding she must present a bold front to the darkies else they would not do her bidding; so she nerved herself for the ordeal. Ordering a low couch taken to the sick man's chamber she had him placed upon it.

"Bring me a panful of hot water, Aunt

Tilly," she said to the old darky. "And keep sending it until I tell you to stop."

"Law, chile! you'se gwine to kill Marse Kunnel. I ain't gwine ter hab nuffin' ter do wid sich foolishness," rebelled the old woman who did some of the dosing of the plantation, and considered herself an authority. "You jest killin' Marse Kunnel."

"Do as I tell you," said Virginia so sternly that the negress looked up astonished. She had never heard such a tone from the girl before. "Do as I tell you, or you shall be whipped."

Seeing that she looked earnest enough to carry out her threat the old woman went off grumbling, but quickly returned with the hot water. Virginia placed the pan under the couch, putting blankets about the Colonel to keep in the steam. The sick man stirred restlessly under the action, but she soothed him tenderly. When she thought that he had perspired enough Virginia bathed him in cold water. The blacks lifted him again to his bed, and covered him with blankets. The girl sat, outwardly calm but inwardly filled with trepidation, awaiting the result. The

effect was almost magical. The action of the steam and cold water cooled the fever and lowered the temperature so that presently the Colonel fell into a natural slumber. Virginia saw that all was well, and then rose to leave the room, for now that the strain was removed she felt weak. But her anxiety had been too great, and she had gone but a few steps ere she fell in a dead faint upon the floor.

"Po' chile, she's done wore out," said the voice of Mammy Began in her ear as she recovered consciousness.

"I am all right, mammy," she murmured, weakly. "How is Uncle Ralph?"

"Sleepin' like a lam', honey. De doctah wid him now, an' he say you done sabled Marse Kunnel's life. He say you smart gal, but law! we all knows dat."

"And Uncle Ralph is really all right?"

"Yes, honey, he is. You needn't worry any mo' 'bout him. De doctah say you mus' stay in bed fer ter night. He an' Sambo is gwine ter watch."

"Let me see him, mammy. I want to see the doctor," insisted Virginia.

"Yes; your uncle is all right," said the

doctor, coming to her in obedience to mammy's call. "Your treatment seems certainly to have been what he needed. It has saved his life, I must acknowledge. But you must not think that it is a remedy for all fevers on that account. I suppose you'll be setting up for a real doctor now?"

"Not unless you will take me into partnership, doctor. I only did it because I wanted Uncle Ralph to have every chance he could to live. I was dreadfully frightened all the time that I was doing it though."

"Tut, tut! Don't talk to me about being afraid. You carried the thing through like a general. I shall tell Ralph Pendleton so. Now, my young lady, don't stir out of that bed until morning. We shall do very well without you."

And Virginia, worn out with anxiety and long watching, gladly obeyed him, her heart full of thankfulness that she had been the means of saving her uncle.

CHAPTER XXIV

LAYING A SPOOK

COLONEL PENDLETON convalesced slowly. The winter snows had rendered the roads impassable so that Mrs. Pendleton and Evelyn had not yet left New York.

“And there is no need for them to come,” declared the Colonel. “I shall return just as soon as I am able. I am getting along very well without them. Write and tell them so.”

So Virginia, with a feeling of relief, wrote as her uncle wished and devoted herself to him assiduously. She wondered that he did not ask her how she came to be at the Hall so opportunely, but though she often found his eyes fixed upon her with a puzzled expression it was long before he spoke to her on the subject. One afternoon the Colonel lay so quietly that she thought him asleep. She was startled presently to find him gazing at her intently.

“What is it, uncle?” she asked, laying aside her work and coming to his side.

“I was wondering,” he said, weakly, “who it was that helped you to escape from my house in Philadelphia, and how you came to be at Forrest Hall.”

“Would you like me to tell you about it, Uncle Ralph?”

Colonel Pendleton nodded assent. Then Virginia related her story. She told how Colonel Brandon had rescued her, the direful tale of Wyoming, her stay among the Indians, how she was freed from them, and finally how she came to be at Forrest Hall. Colonel Pendleton listened attentively.

“Do you hate me, Virginia?” he asked, after the girl had finished her narrative. “I wonder that you can bear me, yet you have saved my life.”

“I would do more for you than that, Uncle Ralph. Do not think that I hate you. I have nothing but warmest regard for you and shall ever have.”

“Have you never felt hard toward me at all, Virginia? Not even through your long captivity?”

“At first I did,” acknowledged the girl, hesitatingly. “I thought that I could never forgive you for your intention of turning me over to that wretch Cunningham, but I have gotten over all that.”

“It was not my intention to keep you there, nor Sir William’s. We meant merely to frighten you. You would not have stayed at the prison but a day or two. We thought that was the only way to get a confession from you. And you can see now, after all you have undergone, that you should have told me everything. It would have saved you much suffering. What were those Quakers to you anyway? What was your mission to Valley Forge?”

“Dear uncle,” said Virginia, much distressed at the question, “please do not ask me that. After the war is over I will gladly tell you all about it. If it were to do over I should do just as I did. I have no regrets upon the subject. Now my sole thought is to care for you until you have fully recovered. Then I shall leave Forrest Hall at the same time you do.”

“You must not do that,” exclaimed the

Colonel. "Have you not had enough of being tossed from pillar to post in other people's houses? Your place is here and here you shall stay. When I leave Forrest Hall you will go with me."

"Let us not talk of it, uncle. Just get well and then we can decide the question."

"There is no question of deciding it," cried the Colonel excitedly. "You stay here, do you hear? Where were you thinking of going?"

"Colonel Brandon and I have adopted each other," said the girl trying to speak lightly. "I shall live with him after the war is over. If you wish, Uncle Ralph, I will stay with you until that time."

Colonel Pendleton almost sprang from his bed.

"Now as sure as you live, you will do no such thing," he roared. "Leave my house for that of Dudley Brandon's! I'd sooner see you dead."

"There! There! You must not excite yourself." Virginia laid her hand on his brow gently. It pained and surprised her to see how the intelligence of her going to Dud-

ley Brandon's home affected him. Would there be a struggle over this too, she wondered. Well, she must keep him quiet now, but she remained firm in her decision to leave. She would not bear the coldness and neglect that would be hers should she remain at Forrest Hall. Her uncle would be kind but would not his new feeling for her wear away with renewed health? As for Evelyn and Mrs. Pendleton they had always disliked her. There was no hope that they would ever do otherwise. She said nothing of her thoughts but continued to soothe the excited man.

"I will stay with you just as long as you need me, Uncle Ralph," she said. "When you don't want me then you will be glad for me to go anywhere."

"Will you stay until I say that I do not want you?" The Colonel grasped her hand eagerly. "I love you, Virginia. As much as my own children I love you. You believe that, don't you?"

"I use to think so," said Virginia sadly, "but of late I have thought that you disliked me."

"No, no; I have always loved you. You are so much like your mother. That is, you

were more like her when you were a child, and I loved her dearly, dearly. Don't you remember how I used to make Evelyn jealous when you were little things because she thought I loved you best?"

"Yes," said Virginia, "I remember. But why did you change, Uncle Ralph? There have been times when I've thought that you hated me."

"It was because you grew so like your father, and I hate him. Then when Ralph left—and I was proud of the boy—I think I disliked you for your influence over him. When you are soft and gentle as you are with me now, you are like your mother, and you grow dear to me. But at times, when you are hard and unyielding, you are your father all over again. You have grown wonderfully like him of late."

"Uncle Ralph," exclaimed Virginia who had listened to his words with astonishment, "did you know my father? I thought that you had only met my mother for a few days on shipboard."

"What have I been saying?" spoke the Colonel irritably. "Can't you make allow-

ance for the fancies of a sick man? How should I have known him?"

He turned from her abruptly, and relapsed into a moody silence. Virginia resumed her work but often the needle was held a long time without taking a stitch. She was fast becoming convinced that Colonel Pendleton had known her parents, and that the story of the manner in which he had met her mother was untrue.

"But I will know the truth some time," she thought resolutely. "He shall tell me. I am no longer a child to be put off with such tales as I have been."

The Colonel regained his health tardily. The cold kept him indoors, therefore his recovery was not so rapid as it would otherwise have been. Although he was past the necessity of unremitting service he kept the girl in constant attendance upon him. He seemed unable to let her out of his sight, and as his manner toward her was usually considerate, Virginia humored him in his desire. There was no further reference made to her leaving. The subject was tacitly dropped between them, but it was in the minds of both.

"Miss Virgie, Miss Virgie!" called Aunt Tilly one evening as Virginia, having seen that her uncle was comfortable for the night, was about to retire to her own chamber.

"What is it, Aunt Tilly? You are quite out of breath. What is the matter?"

"It's spooks," gasped the old woman, her eyes wide with terror. "O chile, chile, sumpin' gwine ter habben suah. Three times did I see it wid dese bery eyes."

"What, Aunt Tilly?" Virginia took the old woman's arm and turned with her back to the kitchen.

"Law, chile! Is we gwine ter go back to dat kitchen?"

"Certainly. If there is anything there I want to see what it is. Come on, Aunt Tilly, I won't let anything hurt you. There!" as they reached the kitchen and the girl looked around. "I don't see a thing."

"Suah as you is bohn, Miss Virgie, sumpin' white and big wid great staring eyes kum ter dis bery windah an' looked in. Dar——"

She uttered a screech and covered her face in terror. The girl turned quickly toward the window and was startled to see a white

face pressed against it. For a moment she stood, a thrill of superstitious awe pervading her being. Then she roused herself, and walked to the door.

"Done go dar, chile. What you gwine ter dew? De spook 'ill ketch you."

"I am going to see what or who it is," said Virginia determinedly, shaking off the old woman's hold. She opened the door as she spoke and peered into the darkness.

"Who are you?" she called boldly. "What do you mean by prowling around the house like this?"

"Virgie," came the reply, "don't you know me?"

"Ralph! Ralph!" Virginia darted in the direction of the voice. "Oh, my dear! my dear! I am so glad you have come! Come right in."

She led him into the kitchen. Aunt Tilly gave a cry of joy at sight of him.

"If it ain't Marse Ralph," she cried gleefully. "An' I thought it war a spook. But bless yer, honey, yer does look like one."

Ralph smiled a grim sort of smile and leaned heavily against the door.

"What is it, Ralph? Are you hurt?" asked Virginia anxiously. "Here! sit down, and lean against me. You look faint and sick."

"I am, Virgie. I was wounded in our last battle. After I was able to be up I was not fit for service until I could rest a bit. So, I thought I'd come home and stay, for I had heard that father was in New York. I walked most of the way, and ——"

"An' you ain't had nuffin' fit ter eat," interrupted Aunt Tilly. "My boy wants some of ole Tilly's cookin'."

"That is half what is the matter," and Ralph smiled wanly. "We've been on short rations a long time, and I haven't had a mouthful to eat since yesterday morning."

Virginia uttered an exclamation of dismay.

"You poor boy!" she cried, the tears falling fast. "I'll help Aunt Tilly get you something now."

"No; stay still, Virgie. Aunt Tilly will fix it. It's good to have you near me again. Tell me about things. I saw father here to-day is the reason I waited until night. I

didn't know how he would receive me, and I didn't have the strength to go on if he shouldn't want me here. He looked bad. Has he been ill?"

"Yes; he has been very ill, but is all right now, though his strength comes back to him slowly. Evelyn and your mother are still in New York. Your father will go back when he is able."

"Does he speak of me, Virgie?"

"No, Ralph. I think our best plan will be to hide you somewhere for to-night and let me see how he feels about you to-morrow. He is awfully bitter against the rebels as he still calls us. But you must stay here, Ralph. Where should you stay but in your own home? We'll manage it even though he shouldn't want you."

"Tell me of yourself, Virgie. Colonel Brandon told me of your deliverance from the Indians, and all you had gone through. What a lot of trouble that trip to Valley Forge brought upon you! And I couldn't do a thing to help you."

"How could you, Ralph? You were fighting for your country. You couldn't be run-

ning around after wandering damsels like a knight-errant, could you?"

"Colonel Brandon could," said Ralph gloomily.

"My dear boy, he is a man, and his position is such that he could do many things that you could not do. Don't you know that I know that you would do everything possible for me, Ralph? You are not sorry that he did when you couldn't, are you?"

"I am selfish," said Ralph contritely. "I'm just as selfish as can be!"

"You're a hungry boy is what is the matter. I think I would say 'most anything if I had not eaten since yesterday morning. Here is Aunt Tilly now with hot coffee and a good supper." Ralph fell to eating ravenously.

"Po' lam'! he wanted his Aunt Tilly's vittals," said the old woman crooningly. "Nebber did tink much of sojer cookin' nohow. Gin'ral Washington done sent de English flyin' long ago ef he'd had ole Tilly ter cook fer him."

"I'll tell him that, Aunt Tilly," laughed Ralph, who was looking better for the food. "I don't know but what you are right.

Good food does put the heart into a man. There is nothing like starvation to take the life out of troops, and that is what the General has had to contend with."

"How is the outlook, Ralph?"

"Bad, Virgie; had it not been for the knowledge that our cause is just, we should have given up long ago. But we fight for liberty and country, and every last one of us will stick to it until either we win or there is nobody left to fight. I am going back as soon as I am stronger. I feel better already."

"Meantime, Ralph, what shall we do with you?" asked Virginia anxiously.

"Why can't I stay with Mammy Began for the night?"

"But you should stay here, Ralph. Not in a cabin."

"A cabin is palatial compared to some places I've stayed. I can bunk 'most anywhere, and mammy will be glad to have me."

"Well, we will try it for to-night. Tomorrow we can make other arrangements."

And so Ralph was stowed in the garret of Mammy Began's cabin.

"An' I'd jest laik ter ketch any one

'sturbin' my boy dere," said the old woman fiercely as she descended the rude steps into the lower room of the hut after seeing Ralph to bed. "Nobody'll know, Miss Virgie, 'ceptin' you an' me, an' ole Till. You'll see, chile. De marse won't let him kum back, so dere he'll haf ter stay."

The old negress's words proved true. When Virginia broached the subject of Ralph to him the Colonel broke into a passion of rage.

"I do not want to hear his name," he stormed. "He is no son of mine."

"But, Uncle Ralph, suppose that he were to return wounded and ill. Wouldn't you receive him?"

"Never! He has made his bed, let him lie in it. If he is wounded let the rebels care for him. He belongs with them. Carter is my only son."

Virginia reported the interview to Ralph with grave face.

"He is bitterer than I thought," remarked the young man. "Never mind, Virgie. I'll stay with Mammy Began until I am strong enough to go back to the army. I just need a little rest anyway. I shall do very well."

And so Ralph remained in the cabin tended by the old black mammy, while his father, ignorant of his son's presence, recuperated in the manor house.

CHAPTER XXV

THE SECRET OF THE OLD CLOCK

It was a stormy day in January. Virginia had been to the cabin of Mammy Began with a basket of delicacies for Ralph. Although it had been some days since his return, his presence remained unknown to any save the two old women and herself. She was pondering on the Colonel's bitterness toward his son as she walked slowly to the house.

"Miss Virgie, Miss Virgie," called Sambo running to meet her. "Marse Kunnel wants you dis minnit. De sojers am a comin'."

"What soldiers, Sambo?" cried Virginia with alarm.

"Marse Kunnel jest say de sojers. He didn't say what ones," returned Sambo. "Does you think dey'll hurt us, Miss Virgie?"

"I don't know, Sambo. I hope not." Virginia hurried into the house and at once sought her uncle. He came to her quickly.

“Virginia, I have just received a message from General Arnold, saying that he, with a force of nine hundred British are on their way to Richmond. He will stop with me for dinner. Do you think that we can provide for so many?”

Virginia stood as if petrified by the announcement. Ralph! That was her thought. What would become of Ralph? Oh, they must not find him!

“What is the matter?” asked the Colonel, noticing her pallor. “Are you afraid that you will be called to account for your actions in Philadelphia? You need have no fear. General Arnold knows naught of the matter, and I have influence enough to protect you from harm if he did.”

But Virginia was still agitated.

“Is General Arnold, Arnold the traitor?” she asked, with an attempt at composure.

“General Arnold was formerly of the American army,” returned Colonel Pendleton; “but I should scarcely call him a traitor. He has merely renewed his allegiance to the King. You have not yet answered my question, child. Can we take care of so many?”

Of course only the officers will dine with us. The soldiers can be accommodated in the outside buildings."

"I will see what can be done, Uncle Ralph, and I think we can manage it; though I would prepare with better grace for any one else than Benedict Arnold. I abhor a traitor."

"Keep such remarks to yourself, Virginia. And listen! Give utterance to no rebel sentiments while the soldiers are here. It would scarcely be a gracious thing under the circumstances, and hardly discreet."

"Uncle Ralph, I will provide entertainment for your guests to the best of my ability. As for my sentiments, they are my own. I will change them for no man."

"At least, then, do not flaunt them unnecessarily in the General's face. Use some discretion, and save both you and myself from embarrassment, I entreat."

"I will do my best, Uncle Ralph. But I will not deny my convictions if it seems necessary to declare them."

"I suppose I must be content with that," remarked the Colonel, after a moment's silence. He had been more considerate of her

feelings since his illness. "Now, Virginia, do not be alarmed if the soldiers are somewhat noisy. Stay!" as a thought struck him. "I know and appreciate your feelings at being the only one of your sex present. Therefore, if it will make you feel more comfortable, I will show you a secure hiding-place where you can conceal yourself at any time that you desire privacy. Come with me."

He led her through the hall and into the dining-room. A tall, venerable looking clock stood on one side of the apartment. In its roomy recesses Virginia had often hidden when as a child she had played hide-and-seek with Ralph and Evelyn. To her surprise Colonel Pendleton paused before it.

"See," said he, opening the door, "at the back of the case is a coat-of-arms. It is the escutcheon of the Pendletons. Sir Ralph Pendleton had the clock made in France. Then it was brought here and put in place in this room. You notice the design is that of two lions: one lying down, the other standing. I press the eye of the recumbent one, and look!"

There was a slight clicking noise, and the

entire back of the case swung inward disclosing a flight of steps.

"There is no time for us to descend, Virginia," said Colonel Pendleton. "Were we to do so we would find a sort of hall which ends in a large chamber, which in turn opens into a subterranean passageway leading to the river. My ancestor had this built as a hiding-place from the Indians. I have shown this to none of the family save Carter. As the oldest son it was of course his due. You can avail yourself of this retreat whenever you choose while the soldiers are here."

"Thank you, uncle," said Virginia, softly. The light had returned to her eyes and the color to her cheeks. Here was the very place for Ralph. Here was a safe asylum for him, and one provided by his own father. "When do you expect your guests?"

"General Arnold said that he would dine with me, and it is now after ten o'clock. I suppose that he will be here between eleven and twelve."

"Then I must see about things immediately. What will you do meantime, Uncle Ralph?"

"A little later I will order Governor to

bring round the coach, and go to meet the General."

"Yes, yes; that will be the very thing to do," spoke the girl feverishly. She longed for the opportunity to get Ralph safely down that stairway. Her uncle's departure would provide the chance she wished. Going to the kitchen she busied herself with Aunt Tilly and the blacks, waiting with nervous anxiety for her uncle to leave. It seemed hours before the rumble of the coach told her that Colonel Pendleton had at last started to meet his guests. Then she ran down to the cabin.

"Ralph, come with me quickly," she said hurriedly. "General Arnold with a force of British soldiers is coming here to dine. They march on to Richmond this afternoon."

"Benedict Arnold, the traitor?" exclaimed Ralph springing to his feet. "Oh, Virgie, couldn't we capture him?"

"Not with a force of nine hundred soldiers about him, Ralph. It is more likely that he will capture you. Come to the house immediately."

"Virgie, there is no place in the house to hide. I will only get you into trouble if they

should suspect anything. I will hurry into the woods and take my chances."

"Come on," cried Virginia imperiously. "I know just what I am doing. There is no time to lose. Come this instant!"

"I dare not refuse when you take that tone," and Ralph followed her obediently. "What a martinet you would make, Virgie. Don't you know that it isn't worth while to trouble so much about such a worthless fellow as I am?"

Ralph spoke moodily. It had cut him to the quick that his father was so bitter against him. Had he had his full strength he would not have remained at the Hall, but he lingered, loth to leave in his weak condition. Virginia hurried him into the dining-room without replying, and closed the door behind them.

"Ralph, I do not know what you are going into, but your father just showed me this place in case I felt fear while the soldiers were here. He says that it was built as a retreat from the Indians."

"Well upon my word," ejaculated Ralph as Virginia pressed the secret spring and the

clock swung backward. "Who would have dreamed the thing was there!"

"Never mind about that now, Ralph, but go down those steps immediately. I don't know what is there, but there is safety from the British at least."

Ralph hesitated a moment but Virginia gave him a gentle push.

"Hurry, hurry," she cried. "They may be here at any moment. I will come to you when I can."

Without more ado Ralph entered the opening and slowly descended the stairs. Virginia waited until he had gone down a few steps and then swung the door back into place. With great relief she then returned to her duties.

All the preparations were completed for the dinner when the rumble of the coach was heard, and Virginia went forward as in duty bound to receive her uncle's guests. Colonel Pendleton sprang from the chaise and turned a beaming face toward her.

"This is General Arnold, my dear," said he graciously. "My niece, General."

For one instant Virginia gazed into the

handsome face of the man before her. He was of commanding figure; athletic, strong and active. His hair was very black and his skin dark almost to swarthinness. He colored slightly under the intent gaze of the girl, then reached out his hand with a winning smile.

"I had the pleasure of being much with your wife and daughter in New York, Colonel Pendleton," he said in a pleasing voice. "Will you pardon me if I say that beauty seems to be a possession common to your family."

The Colonel acknowledged the compliment with stately pleasure. Virginia bowed; then looking the General straight in the face, ignored his outstretched hand pointedly. The act was unmistakable in its directness, and was witnessed by the other officers who joined them at this inopportune moment. In some confusion Colonel Pendleton linked his arm within that of the General's.

"My dear General, I think we will find dinner waiting us. Come! let us partake of it."

Talking volubly he led the way into the dining-room. Virginia performed her duties



SHE IGNORED GENERAL ARNOLD'S OUTSTRETCHED HAND

as hostess in silence. She had not meant to be discourteous but every drop of blood in her body revolted at taking the hand of the traitor. How could he do such an awful thing? How could he do it? she asked herself passionately, and often her questioning glance sought the dark handsome face as if seeking for the answer. But years have passed since then; and the same question which so puzzled the Virginia maiden remains unanswered yet.

The dinner over, the soldiers who had scattered about the plantation eating, and teasing the darkies, were called together and the march on Richmond begun. The Colonel was too displeased with Virginia to talk with her, and withdrew to the library while the girl waiting until she was unobserved, stole into the dining-room, and pressing the spring soon found herself descending the stairs. At the foot of the steps was a narrow passageway which she followed for some distance. It then widened into a large chamber whose walls were of cement. A round stone table with several rude stone benches were the sole furnishings of the room. Ralph was seated

by the table leaning his arms upon it when she entered. He sprang up as soon as he saw her.

"It is as silent as the grave here, Virgie," he said, "and almost as gloomy. I have not heard a sound. I stole up to the head of the steps once, but could only hear the clinking of dishes. Down here one might as well be buried for all one can hear. Did the soldiers come?"

"Yes," answered Virginia. "They came in great numbers, Ralph. I tremble to think what might have happened if you had not come here. They were into everything. Not a negro cabin is there, nor a hen-roost but what they have been through it. If they treat Uncle Ralph's property like that, how will the poor patriots fare?"

"Badly, I fear. I think I must get out of this and help the Virginians to resist the invasion."

"You are not strong enough, Ralph."

"Yes, I am, Virgie. I have thought it all over since I have been here. The rest and the food have done me good. I should have remained but a few days longer in any event.

I am not going to skulk while the old colony is in danger. I am going to-night."

"Oh, Ralph!" Virginia sank down beside him. "I must not say anything against it. In your place I should do the same, and yet I don't like to see you go."

"I know, Virgie, but I must. Now tell me about the enemy. How many there are, and the officers. All about their designs, if you know them."

The girl complied with his wishes, telling him everything that she thought would be of benefit.

"It looks as if a regular invasion of the colony was intended," was Ralph's comment. "We are hardly in the condition to receive it either. The old Dominion is entirely defenseless. She had stripped herself bare to supply the army with fighting material, and the most of her militia are in the Carolinas. Well, it had to come. The wonder is that it has not happened before."

"Ralph, I made your father angry with me for not shaking hands with General Arnold. But I could not. I could not take the hand of a traitor."

"I don't blame you," said Ralph heartily. "If I get a chance I am going to shoot him down like a dog."

"I didn't know that he was lame before."

"Yes; he got that in honorable battle. He was one of the bravest officers of the army. We all loved him. That's what makes it so terrible. That leg ought to be buried with military honors, if he is caught, but the rest of him should hang higher than Haman."

"Will he ever be caught, do you think, Ralph?"

"I don't know. It is a thing most heartily desired by the General. Virgie, if I thought that he would be here again I believe that I would undertake his capture myself."

"Why he is to come back from Richmond!" exclaimed the girl. "But, Ralph, what could you do? you are only one, and he has a large force with him."

"I don't know," said Ralph. "I must try to manage it some way. Sometimes an enterprise is successful through its very boldness. I will let you know if I decide on anything."

I have great faith in your wit, Virgie. I know you would help me."

"Indeed I would," said Virginia earnestly. "And now tell me what you will want to take with you."

"Could you have a horse ready for me, Virgie? I don't like to take one of father's horses, but I have more right to do so than the British. They rob their friends as well as their enemies unblushingly."

"I'll have one for you, Ralph, with food and blankets. Oh, yes! some arms were left here for safe-keeping. You can have some of those."

"Dear me, Virgie," laughed the youth. "You take to foraging the enemies' supplies like a trooper."

"Col. John Butler said that anything was justifiable in war," replied Virginia with sparkling eyes. "I have an Englishman's authority for the act. I'll come to the stairs when everything is quiet, and your father asleep. Good-bye."

That night Ralph stole softly from the house, mounted the horse provided for him by Virginia, and set forth to help defend the colony from the invasion of the foe.

CHAPTER XXVI

RALPH LEADS A FORLORN HOPE

ARNOLD'S march against Richmond met with but a show of resistance. Baron Steuben who had command of affairs in Virginia had just sent off all the troops he could raise to the assistance of General Greene. A body of militia, numbering about two hundred, was hastily collected by Governor Jefferson but these, after firing on the British, retreated up the river, and the place was occupied by the enemy. Arnold proceeded to burn the warehouses and public buildings. A detachment of cavalry, under Colonel Simcoe, was sent to Westham where the powder was thrown into the canal, the arsenal burned and all supplies destroyed. Arnold then withdrew from the town, and returned to Forrest Hall with a few of his officers while his men ravaged the neighboring plantations.

Virginia listened with heavy heart to the recital of the success of the undertaking. The

future looked dark indeed for the beloved colony. The General was in high spirits, and predicted the speedy downfall of the American cause.

"The Carolinas and Georgia are already ours," he said to Colonel Pendleton. "Sir Henry Clinton holds New York. The rebel troops are mutinous because of poor pay and insufficient food and clothing. Let us gain the ascendancy in Virginia, which at present furnishes most of the supplies to the army, and we will be masters of the situation."

"It does indeed seem as if we would at last conquer," remarked the Colonel. "The struggle has been long and sanguinary. I shall be glad when it is ended."

The maiden withdrew from the room unable to listen to the conversation with composure. Aunt Tilly beckoned to her mysteriously.

"Marse Ralph's waitin' ter see yer at de grove," she whispered as Virginia obeyed her call.

"Ralph!" ejaculated the girl. "Oh, he should not dare to come here now! How rash he is!"

Hastily donning a wrap she ran down to the grove. Ralph stepped from behind a tree.

"Ralph, you must not stay here. Don't you know that the country is overrun with the British? It would go hard with you if you were caught. You know their cruelty to prisoners."

"Yes, I know," said Ralph coolly. "But soldiers must take such chances. Now, Virgie, I have been watching that traitor, and I am going to try to capture him. He will stay here to-night, will he not?"

"Yes; but, Ralph ——"

"Where will he sleep, Virgie? In the big guest-chamber?"

"Yes; that has been prepared for him. But a part of his staff is with him, and I do not know how many of his men will be about the grounds."

"I don't care how many there are if I can once get inside. Now listen to my plan, and see what you think of it. I found Joe Daniel at home and he is with me. We want you to leave the kitchen door unbolted. Joe and I will steal in when every one is asleep and

slip into the room where Arnold is. It is lucky that it is on the ground floor. We will bind and gag him before he awakens, and then carry him down that secret passage where he will be safe until we get an opportunity to take him to General Washington."

"It seems simple enough, and very easy," remarked Virginia after a few moments of thought. "But, Ralph, I am afraid for you to try it. Suppose you should fail?"

"We must run that risk," said Ralph easily.

"What if there should be sentinels?"

"Why, there are sure to be, Virgie, but not within the house. Were General Arnold in his tent on the field, the thing would be too dangerous to attempt. But here it is different. For one thing, we have the secret passage. Then the soldiers have been feasting and rioting for several days. As a natural consequence they will not be so alert as usual. There is no force to speak of opposed to them, and that begets confidence. Considering all these things I think we are safe in believing that the vigilance of the soldiers will be re-

laxed, and that there will be very little peril in the undertaking."

"It may be, Ralph," said Virginia dubiously, "but I cannot but wish that you would not try it."

"Just you leave the door unbolted, Virgie, and forget all about the matter," said the youth soothingly. "You would naturally feel some fear, but Joe and I are old campaigners and used to this sort of thing."

"If you should fail, Ralph."

"Then we fail; that is all. Joe wants to do something to retaliate. Arnold burned Pine Grove after sacking it, Virgie."

"Oh, Ralph!" faltered Virginia. "And Polly?"

"The Squire heard of their approach in time to escape with his family. They have gone beyond the mountains for safety. Our colony has a great score to settle with that man."

"I am so sorry, so sorry," said Virginia, her heart very full at the affliction of her friends.

"So am I. I must go now. Joe is waiting for me. We have a fine place of concealment

in the woods where the red-coats would never think of looking for us; so don't be uneasy about us. Good-bye."

"Good-bye," returned the girl. She went back to the house, her mind filled with vague misgivings.

Colonel Pendleton, well knowing Virginia's feelings toward his guests, excused her from any attempt toward entertaining them. She presided at the table simply and with dignity, and employed herself at other times by looking well after the ways of the household. The day dragged its weary length to a close; yet it was with a feeling of dread that Virginia beheld the approach of night.

As Ralph had said, General Arnold deemed himself perfectly safe. A number of his men straggled in, and were assigned sleeping places in the outbuildings. The majority of them with their officers were quartered among the near-by plantations. The officers who remained with Arnold were given sleeping places in the manor. The guest-chamber was a large apartment adjoining the drawing-room and just across the hall from the dining-room. Could Ralph and Joe effect an en-

trance quietly, their plan was at least feasible. Virginia saw with elation that Arnold was the only one who was to sleep on the lower floor.

Leaving the kitchen door unbolted she retired to her room but not to rest. The steady tramp, tramp of the sentinel stationed without the house filled her breast with fear. She wondered if Ralph and Joe could escape his watchfulness. It seemed hours to her before the officers retired; but at last the games and the talk ceased and the house grew quiet as sleep descended upon the inmates.

Virginia strained her ears to catch the least sound. She took up her flute and fingered it longingly, wishing that she might play to relieve the nervous tension. The minutes passed. Then all at once she straightened up, and listened intently. She no longer heard the rhythmic tramp of the guard around the house. Why had he stopped? What had happened to him? Were Ralph and Joe even then in the house? Unable to bear the suspense the girl stole from her room and out into the hall to the head of the stairs. Stealthy footsteps sounded on the floor below.

They drew nearer and nearer to the guest-chamber. The door opened softly and all was still for a time ; and then ——

“ Help ! Help ! ” rang through the house, breaking the stillness. “ Delaney ! Pendleton ! Where are you ? ”

There followed the sound of running, and Virginia heard Ralph’s shrill whisper :

“ Quick, Joe ! The dining-room ! Oh, if their attention could be distracted for just a moment. ”

Virginia darted back into her room just as the officers and Colonel Pendleton came rushing forth. Her mind was filled with the thought that she must help the boys to gain time. Snatching up the flute she threw up the window and leaning far out, poured forth the strains of Yankee Doodle with all her might.

“ To arms ! ” shouted General Arnold, hoarsely, his voice sounding high above the confusion below. “ The enemy is upon us. To arms ! To arms ! ”

The officers ran from the house as the men poured out of their quarters. Satisfied that the boys were by this time down the passage

Virginia closed the window softly and awaited the result.

The sentinel—bound hand and foot and gagged—was found outside. As no attack followed the music the soldiers scattered and began to search the premises. Failing to find the foe or any evidence of him, they returned to the manor house very much bewildered.

“It is certainly very mysterious,” Virginia heard Colonel Pendleton declare as Arnold returned from his fruitless search.

“Were it not for the music and the condition of the guard, I would be inclined to think the whole thing a nightmare,” said Arnold, gravely. “As it is I must consider that it was an attack upon me personally.”

“My dear General, I hope not,” cried the Colonel. “It would grieve me inexpressibly should harm come to you while under my roof. I hope that you are mistaken.”

“No, Colonel. Listen, and you shall judge for yourself. I had just fallen into slumber when I felt my arms seized in a sturdy grasp, and a voice whisper, ‘The rope. Quick!’ I should have thought it but a dream had I not attempted to move my arms. When I

found that I could not, I called for help. There were certainly two or more persons, and they scampered when I called. Had my sleep been a little more sound their purpose would have been accomplished, and I at this moment a prisoner."

"The rascals!" ejaculated Colonel Pendleton. "They may be even now in hiding in the house. Let us search it."

The lower rooms were gone through, and then the party ascended the stairs.

"Virginia!" and Colonel Pendleton rapped on her door. "Are you awake?"

"Yes, uncle. Do you want me?" Virginia opened her door.

"Ah! you are up too," said the Colonel. "Don't be alarmed, my dear. There has been some disturbance, but it is over now. An attack was made upon the General, and we are seeking the perpetrators of it. Will you rouse Aunt Tilly, and see if we can't have a little lunch? None of us will care for sleep after this."

"Certainly, uncle." Virginia ran down the stairs with alacrity, glad that she was not to be questioned.

"I for one do not blame the Yankees for their wish to capture Arnold," she heard a British officer say in a low tone as she passed through the hall.

"Nor I," returned his companion heartily. "And I tell you what, Delaney; it goes against the grain with me to serve under a traitor."

"And with me also. We but voice the sentiments of the rest of the officers. An Arnold for an André was a poor exchange."

"I should say so. Arnold is not worthy any honest man's regard, while Major André commanded the respect even of his enemies."

"Even the people for whom he betrayed us scorn him," said Virginia to herself. "What has he gained by his treachery? Eternal ignominy and the abhorrence of all honorable men, be they friend or foe. Thank God that he is not my father! I would rather be nameless and unknown all my life than to have a man like that for my father."

And the sentiments of the little maid of long ago have filled the breasts of those who bear the name of Arnold; for none will claim him as their kinsman.

CHAPTER XXVII

ILL-TIDINGS

IN the morning General Arnold and his men proceeded to Portsmouth ; and it was not until the next night that Virginia dared to release the youths from their hiding-place. The young fellows issued from their retreat in a crestfallen manner.

“ Didn’t we make a mess of it ? ” said Ralph in a disgusted tone. “ We had hardly touched the fellow before he began to call for help. A guilty conscience must make him a light sleeper.”

“ He said himself that the attempt would have succeeded had he been deeper in slumber,” comforted Virginia. “ And the officers expressed their sympathy for the desire to capture him. They are not pleased to be under him either.” She related the conversation she had overheard.

“ What I want to know,” said Joe between

times as he demolished a pie, "is, who blew that tune? Some of our people must have been near and known of our need."

"Some did," laughed the girl mischievously.

"Virgie, was it you?" cried the boys in unison. "We never once thought of you."

"It was even I, gentlemen," said Virginia dropping a courtesy. "I heard Ralph's whisper, 'Oh, for something to distract their attention a moment!' I had been wishing that I could play the flute to relieve my mind while I waited to see how you came out, else I should never have thought of it. When I heard what Ralph said, I ran back from the head of the stairs to my own room, and catching up the flute leaned out the window and played 'Yankee Doodle' hoping that they would think the patriots were without. The ruse succeeded. They all rushed outside which gave you time to get down the stairway."

"Virgie, a most uncommonly fine boy was spoiled by your being a girl," declared Ralph. "Now to do that would never have occurred to me."

"It might not to me either, had I been a boy," retorted Virginia.

"I think you are right," said Joe with emphasis. "For quick wit give me a girl every time."

"Well, some girls," admitted Ralph. "All of them are not like Virgie though; I believe that if we had let her do the planning our plot would have succeeded."

"I have no doubt of it," declared Virginia.

"Next time we will know better," said Ralph. "Now we must be going. Joe and I haven't joined in the defense of the colony yet, but we are going to do so. I hope that we will be more successful in that than we have been here."

"Everything was against you, Ralph. You might not have been able to deliver Arnold to General Washington had your plan succeeded. The colony is filled with the British."

"That is true, Virgie. Well, we must be off. We will see you again when we can. Good-bye."

"Good-bye." Virginia accompanied them to the door of the kitchen. Once more fare-

wells were exchanged, and then the youths stole off and were lost in the darkness.

This was not the last time that Forrest Hall was visited by the British. Parties of them were continually coming to be fed and cared for. The smoke-houses were stripped of their contents; the hen-coops boasted not a single feathered occupant; the pantries and cellars were bereft of their contents so that by the time spring opened the Hall was sore put to for food for its inmates. Colonel Pendleton, true to the instincts of a Virginia gentleman, bore all uncomplainingly.

Mrs. Pendleton and Evelyn were still in New York. The Colonel would not give his consent for them to come home as Virginia had become the arena of action. The enemy had plainly determined to carry the war there, and there everything was concentrating. Lord Cornwallis was on his march to form a junction with a British force on its way to Virginia, and it was supposed the Commonwealth would be an easy prey. The fall of the great province would end the contest. To reduce it under British sway was now the work of Cornwallis.

General Phillips, who had been in command before Cornwallis reached the Colony, died of fever and the command devolved upon Arnold. The officers became mutinous at being compelled to serve under him, and Sir Henry Clinton was obliged to recall him to New York.

All of the Whig inhabitants were obliged to seek safety beyond the mountains, leaving their plantations to the mercy of the British. Ravages followed in every quarter. Tarleton's cavalry proved themselves the scourge of Virginia as they had been in the Carolinas. They went with torch and sword through the whole James River region: burning houses, carrying off horses, cutting the throats of those which were too young to use. All the land of tide-water Virginia was swept as by a tornado. The growing crops were destroyed; the grain burned in the mills; the plantations laid waste, and even the negroes carried off with the cattle and horses.

The province was truly in the hands of the enemy. The Marquis Lafayette was sent by Washington to the defense of the Colony, and Governor Jefferson appointed General Nelson

to the command of the militia, but their united forces were unequal to combat with the enemy. The two armies spent the summer in marching and countermarching while no decisive engagement took place. The utmost that Lafayette could do was to watch the movements of Cornwallis. The headquarters of the Marquis were for a time at Richmond but Cornwallis marched against the city and Lafayette hastily withdrew from it.

Cornwallis, after destroying all the stores and supplies, returned to Portsmouth and from thence, under the directions of Sir Henry Clinton, to York and Gloucester which he began to fortify.

So long as Lafayette was at Richmond, Virginia could see and hear from Ralph frequently, but when the Marquis removed his headquarters, tidings of her cousin became very irregular, and after some weeks ceased altogether. She became alarmed as the days rolled by and brought no news of him. She grew restless and uneasy and her apprehensions were almost more than she could bear.

One day in the early part of September she

saw a man in the uniform of a Continental soldier approaching the house cautiously. Virginia ran to meet him.

"All is safe," she cried. "There are no British here. Did you want me?"

"No, miss, but I think you will do," said the man taking a folded paper from his breast pocket. "Would you please give this to Colonel Pendleton?"

Placing the epistle in her hand he disappeared in the shrubbery before the girl could detain him.

"It is for Uncle Ralph," mused Virginia, looking at the superscription. "I wonder if it is about Ralph. I do hope no harm has befallen him."

With anxious heart she hastened to Colonel Pendleton.

"Uncle Ralph, a man has just given me this letter to give you," she said. "I am afraid that it contains bad news."

"I think not," smiled the Colonel taking the missive from her. "There is nothing that can happen to us. We are at last under the protection of the King. I feel safer than I have for the past six years."

He opened the epistle as he spoke and glanced down the page.

“Merciful Goodness!” broke from his lips.

“What is it?” cried the girl. “May I read the letter, Uncle Ralph?”

“Yes, read it,” groaned the Colonel.

Virginia grew pale as death as she read the following words:

“Col. Ralph Pendleton,
Forrest Hall.

“HONORED SIR:—

This is to inform you that your son, Ralph, acting as a scout for the Continental army has been taken prisoner by the enemy, and is now in the hands of Lord Cornwallis. We are informed that he has been condemned to death as a spy.

“Will you not use your influence for the release of your son? We of the army are powerless.

“I have the honor, my dear sir, to be
Your most respectful and obedient servant,

“DUDLEY BRANDON,

Col. 10th Division Cavalry,
Continental Army.”

Virginia reeled and would have fallen had not Colonel Pendleton caught her. It was

only for a moment that she was overcome however.

“There is no time to be lost,” she cried as she recovered herself. “Oh, Uncle Ralph, we must hurry! hurry!”

“Hurry! Hurry for what?” asked the Colonel moodily. “What is there to be done? The boy chose his side. Let him take the consequences.”

“He shall not,” cried the girl frantically. “Uncle Ralph, have you not fed and taken care of the British for months? Are not your coffers empty, and your plantation stripped because of their demands? ’Twould be but a small return for the service you have rendered them should they kill your son.”

“He is not my son,” uttered the white lips of the Colonel. “I disowned him long ago.”

“Does that make any difference?” asked the girl hotly. “Deny and deny the fact a thousand times and you cannot make him the less your son. Have you no feeling that you will permit your own flesh and blood to die so? Are you inhuman that you care not that your son should perish like a common felon? Ralph, of whom you were so proud! Ralph,

your boy! What will his mother say when she knows that you could have saved him, and would not? Oh, unnatural father! what will the world think? Have you no pride, no ——”

“In mercy’s name, girl, cease!” cried Colonel Pendleton hoarsely, clutching her by the arm. “Know you not that my heart is breaking? I could shed tears of blood if that would assuage my agony. Think you not that I do not feel the awfulness of it all? That Ralph, a Pendleton, should die on the gibbet ——”

His voice broke. Virginia clasped her arms about him tightly.

“Forgive me, uncle,” she murmured. “Forgive me! But oh, for the love that once you bore him, for the sake of his mother and sister, go to his aid.”

“For their sakes I will go,” said the Colonel brokenly. “If I can do no more I will at least gain the permission to have him shot like a soldier. Cornwallis will grant me that. Tell Sambo to have my horse saddled at once.”

“And mine too, Uncle Ralph.”

“No, Virginia. It is no place for a girl.

The whole country is infested by soldiery either of one side or the other. It would be unseemly for a maiden to be amongst them."

"Uncle, should we fall in with the Continentals I will answer for good treatment as I am a rebel. With the British you shall be my protector."

"Still ——"

"Please, Uncle Ralph. I should wear my heart out were I to stay here alone. And the danger to me would be just as great, for there would be only the darkies to protect me."

"True," assented the Colonel. "Have it as you will then, Virginia, but use dispatch in preparing for the journey."

"I will, Uncle Ralph." Virginia left the room. In a short time she was habited for the ride, and uncle and niece set forth upon their mission.

CHAPTER XXVIII

A GALLANT FRENCHMAN

THE autumn weather was bright and invigorating. Under other circumstances Virginia would have enjoyed the journey, but, as it was, her heart was heavy and her courage only sustained by the fact that they were hastening to Ralph's aid with the utmost speed.

The best route to York where Lord Cornwallis had taken his station was by way of Williamsburg and from thence by the "great road" which led to the town. Colonel Pendleton was deterred from taking this route by the fact that Lafayette was at Williamsburg. Therefore he proceeded down the peninsula along the north bank of the James, hoping to reach Cornwallis without molestation by the Americans. In this however he was doomed to disappointment.

The first day of their journey was fast

drawing to a close. The golden rays of the setting sun tinged the red earth with warm color. The sky was splendid with pink, and gold, and crimson, and its dazzling glory was reflected in the clear bosom of the noble river. Just above the horizon the evening star hung tremblingly, its dim radiance increasing as that of the day orb declined. The quiet beauty of the scene soothed Virginia's perturbed spirit, and was not without its effect upon the Colonel.

"Look, uncle!" broke from the girl's lips presently.

With a start Colonel Pendleton aroused himself.

"What is it, Virginia? Oh! how very unfortunate!"

Around a bend in the road a band of horsemen appeared. It was too late to retreat, or to put themselves in hiding. The cavalcade perceived the two at the same instant that Colonel Pendleton caught sight of them, and spurred their horses into a run. Colonel Pendleton reined in his horse and surveyed the troopers haughtily.

"Well, gentlemen," he said coolly as the

men surrounded them, "who are you, and what will you have?"

"We are a detachment of cavalry from Lieutenant Colonel Lee's brigade," was the response. "Who are you, and where are you going?"

"I am Colonel Pendleton of Forrest Hall, and am going with my niece to see Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown. Now, having answered your queries, will you kindly permit us to continue our journey?"

"What is your business with Cornwallis?" asked the leader suspiciously.

"That, sir, does not concern you," returned the Colonel with asperity.

"It concerns every soldier of the Continental army," was the response. "We cannot allow any one to join Lord Cornwallis without knowing the why and wherefore of it. To do so might work harm to ourselves."

"Can you not take my word, sir," cried the Colonel angrily, "that my business with his lordship has no connection whatever with your army?"

"Nevertheless, Colonel Pendleton, I cannot let you pass until I know your errand. It

seems to me that I have heard of a Colonel Pendleton, a loyalist, whose plantation near Richmond has become famous as a rendezvous for the British. Are you he?"

"I am," replied the Colonel stiffly.

"Then, sir, I have the honor to inform you that you are my prisoner. You will have to accompany us to headquarters."

"Lead on," said Colonel Pendleton savagely. "Perhaps your superior officers will know better how to deal with a gentleman."

"Uncle," cried Virginia who had listened with alarm to this conversation. Going to headquarters meant so much time taken from the accomplishment of their journey, and time was precious. "Uncle, tell them why we are going. We must not be detained."

"Silence, Virginia. This is not a matter for girls to decide. Let me be the judge of what is best."

"March on," was the leader's order, and the cavalrymen turned their horses toward Williamsburg, carrying Colonel Pendleton and Virginia with them. The ride was a long, hard one to the girl already fatigued by her day's travel. At length it was ended and

they entered the camp of the Americans. They were taken at once to the Raleigh Inn, and placed under a close guard.

"You will be brought before Marquis Lafayette in the morning," said the leader. "It is too late to disturb him to-night, and the thing isn't so pressing but that it can wait."

"At your pleasure, sir," was Colonel Pendleton's reply.

"But it is pressing," cried Virginia bursting into tears. "We may be too late. Oh, Ralph, Ralph!"

"What is it that you wish to see Lord Cornwallis about?" asked the cavalryman as he conducted the girl to another apartment. "Believe me, miss, when I say that to be perfectly frank is your wisest course."

"I know it," answered Virginia through her tears. "There is nothing to conceal save that Uncle Ralph is so proud, and he doesn't wish it known that his son is condemned to die by Lord Cornwallis."

"Colonel Pendleton's son?" asked the man pausing in astonishment. "I thought that he was a Tory."

"Uncle Ralph is, sir; but Ralph Pendleton, his son, is a patriot."

"Is Ralph Pendleton his son? Were you going to save him? Then this must be reported instantly to the Marquis. He has grieved that it was not in his power to save the boy. Ralph is a great favorite with the commander-in-chief. But how do we know that you speak truly?"

Virginia stared at him blankly.

"I don't know," she said, presently. "Oh!" as a sudden thought struck her, "Colonel Brandon knows us. It was he who informed Uncle Ralph about his son."

"Then the matter can be easily arranged," said the soldier, heartily. "I am glad that Pendleton stands a show of getting off. We all like him. Now, if you will kindly wait until my return, I will go to the Marquis. I don't believe that you have much time to lose."

"Certainly I will wait," cried the maiden, eagerly. "And thank you a thousand times for your kindness."

The man saluted for reply and left the room. He was not long in returning.

"The Marquis will see you immediately," he said. "Come; don't be afraid to speak right out."

Virginia followed him to the headquarters of Marquis Lafayette. Despite her anxiety for Ralph she could not forbear a glance of curiosity at the dashing young Frenchman who had already become endeared to every American heart.

The Marquis rose from his chair as the maiden entered his presence, and advanced to meet her.

"A greeting, mademoiselle," he said, with a winning smile that put Virginia at her ease instantly. "What is this I hear? that you and Colonel Pendleton are on your way to obtain Ralph Pendleton's release? Is it true?"

"Perfectly true, sir."

"Tell me of it," commanded he.

Virginia gladly obeyed, and told of Colonel Brandon's letter to Colonel Pendleton, and how the father was resolved to have the sentence at least commuted to shooting.

"But the Colonel? They tell me that he will tell nothings. But you assure me that he has

no other business with his lordship than this?"

"I do, sir. If you will take the word of a girl who is as ardent a patriot as yourself, I will give you that word that there is nothing else."

"You carry the truth on your face, mademoiselle," said the Marquis, gallantly.

"And you will not judge my uncle harshly, sir? He is a proud man; and it was a severe blow to him when his son espoused the cause of the colonies."

"Ah, these Virginia gentlemen," laughed the Frenchman, shrugging his shoulders. "Do I not know them? Proud, haughty, quick to resent, but they fight, mademoiselle; they fight like demons. Now rest till the sun shine. Then you shall go your way. Colonel Brandon is away on business, but I trust you. Good-night."

With light heart Virginia returned to the chamber assigned her and soon fell into a restful sleep. She was aroused just after day-break by a light rapping on the door, and the voice of Colonel Pendleton calling,

"Get up, Virginia. We must start betimes this morning."

"Yes, uncle. I will be ready soon," she cried, springing up. Her toilet was quickly made. Colonel Pendleton awaited her in the hall with an officer.

"We are to breakfast with the Marquis, my dear," he said, "and then we will continue our journey."

Virginia was surprised at the gracious manner of her uncle toward the Frenchman. They chatted pleasantly through the meal, and when they parted, did so with mutual expressions of good-will.

"He is quite a gentleman," was Colonel Pendleton's comment, as they rode away under the escort of a body of soldiers. "He visited me last night in person, and, upon hearing my reason for seeing his lordship, at once said that he would pass us with an escort beyond the American lines. It takes a gentleman to understand another. What a pity that so gallant a man should cast his fortune with the rebels!"

"In what more noble cause could he enlist?" asked the girl, with some heat.

"Well, we won't quarrel over that, my dear," said her uncle who seemed in great

good humor. "He is at least a gentleman."

Without further mishap they reached Yorktown at sunset. Before the Revolution it had been quite an emporium—being the only port from which the Virginia planters shipped their tobacco to England. The town had hitherto escaped the ravages of war. It stood on the bank of the river York, thirty or forty feet above the water, and had been surrounded with a line of fortifications on the land side.

The mansion chosen by the British commander for his headquarters lay within the fortifications but without the town proper.

"This is an unexpected honor," said the British General as Colonel Pendleton and Virginia were ushered into his presence. "It gives me great pleasure to see you, my dear Colonel. May I ask what brings you to our camp? You look full of some weighty matter."

"My lord, I am unfortunately in that very condition. I have been advised that my son, Ralph Pendleton, is a prisoner in your hands, and that he has been condemned to die the death of a spy."

“Ralph Pendleton! Is he your son?” asked his lordship in surprise. “Why, Colonel, this is news to me! You are such a loyal supporter of the King that I never dreamed the young man could be a son of yours.”

“It is too true,” said the Colonel gravely. “The boy disappointed me bitterly when he sided with the rebels, and I have declared that he is no longer a son of mine. Still, sir, when it comes to having a Pendleton die a death of this kind I find the kinship will not be denied.”

“Yet is it not asking a great deal to request his release? I presume that is your errand. You know, Colonel, the duties that devolve upon us as soldiers are not always pleasant ones, and I put it to you as to a soldier: What course is the proper one when a man is caught spying upon his enemy’s camp?”

“There is but one proper one, sir. That is his immediate execution,” replied the Colonel firmly. “But you mistake me, my lord, when you think that I wish my son’s release. I do not ask his life, but I do implore by the service I have rendered his Majesty’s cause



"OH, SAY WE ARE NOT TOO LATE!"

that my son may meet death like a soldier. Sir, I ask that my son be shot."

"Oh, no, no," cried Virginia passionately. "No, my Lord. Not that! Give us his life."

Lord Cornwallis looked at them curiously for a moment.

"I regret," he began suavely, "that it is not in my power to grant this request of yours, Colonel Pendleton. You have spoken like a true soldier, and it would give me great pleasure to do as you wish, but ——"

"Oh, have we come too late!" shrieked Virginia wildly. "O say that we are not too late!"

"If it be true, we must submit to the decrees of Providence," said Colonel Pendleton calmly, but his face was very pale. "Speak, my lord. Is all over?"

"For your sakes I am glad to say—no; for the sake of our cause I am sorry to be compelled to admit that Ralph Pendleton escaped this morning."

"Escaped? Thank God!" gasped Virginia. She swayed dizzily for a moment, and then fell in an unconscious heap on the floor.

CHAPTER XXIX

CAUGHT IN THE TRAP

VIRGINIA'S anxiety over Ralph had been so great that her joy in his escape prostrated her.

"We will rest for a few days before returning," said Colonel Pendleton. "I fear the journey has been too much for you, child."

"No, I am glad that I came," affirmed the girl. "And Ralph has really escaped! I think it would have killed me had we been too late."

"Well, the boy is all right now," said the father. "I only hope that he will keep out of such scrapes in future. He might not be so fortunate another time."

"Aren't you glad, Uncle Ralph?"

"Well, yes; I am pleased of course that a son of mine should not meet such an ignominious death. But after all it would have been only his just deserts. He should not expose himself to such a fate."

Virginia smiled.

"I think Ralph would not mind to what he exposed himself if he thought he was advancing the cause of liberty," she said. "He is very brave, Uncle Ralph."

"What do you know about it," commented her uncle. "Merely because he is in an army doesn't make him brave."

"Yes, but Lady Washington told me that he was at Valley Forge," said the girl. "She said that it was a characteristic of the Pendletons, and that Ralph was endowed with it to rashness."

"Lady Washington said that?" Colonel Pendleton tried to look severe. "I don't believe that I would repeat Lady Washington's speeches in a British encampment."

"I only wished you to know that I was not alone in considering Ralph brave," said Virginia slyly. She knew that deep down in his heart Colonel Pendleton rejoiced in his son's escape, and she wished to improve the opportunity to soften his feelings toward Ralph. "I will not say them to any one save you, Uncle Ralph."

"I would refrain from doing that until we

are at the Hall, Virginia. Perhaps then there would be no harm in it, although I would prefer not to hear them."

"Very well," said the girl meekly. "When do we return, Uncle Ralph?"

"Not before you are thoroughly rested, my dear. I have been thinking that perhaps it would be just as well for us not to go back to the Hall. Its situation is somewhat exposed, and if Cornwallis joins Sir Henry in New York we would be at the mercy of the rebels."

"Where would we go then?"

"To New York with Cornwallis. Sir Henry expects Washington to attack him there. With Cornwallis it would be easy to whip the whole Continental army. I should like to see it."

"Oh!" cried Virginia in dismay.

"However, the matter is not fully decided. Sir Henry may send reinforcements here instead of having his lordship join him. He expects the fleet shortly. It will be time enough for us to decide when it arrives."

Virginia lay thinking intently. What should she do if her uncle should conclude to

go to New York? She did not want to leave Virginia. She thought long and deeply over the matter but could arrive at no conclusion. The days passed bringing no fleet nor news of its whereabouts. Once the serenity of the commander was disturbed by the sound of distant cannonading at sea, but he could not find out its cause.

Virginia's indisposition proved but temporary, and she was soon in her usual health. Lord Cornwallis had insisted that they should be his guests during their stay in the town, and they had accepted his hospitality. One afternoon in the latter part of September Lord Cornwallis and the Colonel were having a game of chess. Virginia sat at a little distance from them embroidering.

"'Tis your move, my lord," said Colonel Pendleton as his lordship seemed to be hesitating.

"My move, Colonel? So 'tis! So 'tis! I thought that I heard some confusion without. Ah! 'Tis even so."

He paused, his pawn suspended in his hand, a listening look on his face.

"My lord, my lord!" cried a soldier burst-

ing into the room. "General Washington and the whole Continental army are advancing from Williamsburg!"

"General Washington? Impossible! Washington is in New York."

"My lord, upon my life, I speak the truth. I saw him myself, and I nearly killed my horse to bring you the news."

"If your statement is verified you shall have another horse," exclaimed his lordship starting up. He hastened from the apartment followed by Colonel Pendleton. Virginia had listened to the tidings with mingled emotions of joy and fear.

"Washington!" she whispered. "Washington! What does it mean?"

What it meant was soon apparent to all. Before sunset the American army and their French allies were encamped before the town. They immediately began preparations for a siege. The French fleet appeared in the bay, and Cornwallis perceived that he was in a trap. Washington had conducted his movements with so much secrecy that the Britisher knew nothing of them, deeming him in New York. A runner was immediately dispatched

to Sir Henry Clinton, informing him of the condition of affairs, and invoking aid.

Meantime the fortifications of the enemy rose formidably before the besieged town, and on the sixth of October the assault began in earnest.

"Can you hold the place, my lord?" asked Colonel Pendleton anxiously of the commander one morning.

"Certainly," was the confident reply. "Sir Henry has informed me that reinforcements will be sent soon. I imagine that the surprisers will themselves be surprised shortly."

"But the Americans hold your entire outside line of defenses," remarked the Colonel.

"They would not have done so had I not retired from them," replied his lordship haughtily. "I preferred to concentrate my strength upon the town. Have no fear, Colonel. We shall hold our own. Do you wish to join a sortie that will be made to-day?"

"With pleasure, sir," replied the Colonel instantly. "It is long since I have done military duty."

"And like an old war horse you scent the

battle from afar, eh?" laughed the Commander. "Well, it is always the way with old soldiers."

Virginia was unaware that her uncle had joined the assault that the British made upon the Americans. It was a superb dash. The Englishmen succeeded in regaining one of their redoubts which was in the hands of the enemy, but they were soon driven out of it. Some were taken prisoners; many were wounded, and only a few succeeded in regaining the town unhurt. Colonel Pendleton was among the latter number. Virginia was much troubled when she learned what he had done.

"Are you hurt, Uncle Ralph?"

"No, child."

"I wish you would not engage in action, Uncle Ralph," she said tremblingly. "Suppose you were to meet Ralph. What an awful thing it would be."

"For him, or for me, Virginia?" asked the Colonel trying to speak lightly. "It is sometimes harder to sit still than to be in action. Don't worry. Unless we are reinforced soon, I fear that Ralph may have the pleasure of

being on the winning side. Our condition is fast becoming critical." He broke off abruptly and left the room.

For ten days the siege was pushed with unabated vigor by the Americans. Cornwallis daily grew more and more perturbed. The expected troops had not yet arrived and his state was becoming desperate. Again and again he sent to Sir Henry Clinton for aid. The end was fast approaching.

On the fourteenth the inner works of the town were stormed by the allies. The headquarters of the British Commander seemed to be the particular target for the bullets of the Americans, and his lordship advised an immediate move.

"Find a retreat for yourself and niece in one of the small houses, Colonel," he said as they left the manor house. "I believe that a cottage will be safer than a large dwelling in a case of this kind."

"I think you are right, my lord. Come, Virginia! This is no place for you," he added at sight of her pale face.

"Take care," screamed the girl suddenly flinging herself before him.

"My child! My child! she is killed!" cried the Colonel as she sank at his feet.

"She may be merely wounded," said Cornwallis pityingly. "I suspect that bullet was intended for me. Carry her to a place of safety, Colonel."

Colonel Pendleton already had the girl in his arms. She stirred weakly, and presently looked up at him.

"Am I dying, Uncle Ralph?"

"I don't know, child. I hope not. You—you saved me." His voice broke. Sobs choked his utterance, and great tears splashed on the girl's face.

"Why, you are crying!" she exclaimed wonderingly. "Don't, uncle."

The Colonel could not reply. He bore her slight form to a small cottage and pushed through the door. The room in which he found himself seemed deserted. A low couch stood on one side and on this he deposited his burden.

"Will you mind if I leave you a moment, Virginia?" he asked huskily. "I want a surgeon, and there is no one to send."

"D-don't go," gasped the girl opening her

eyes. "There is—something I want—to—know, Uncle Ralph."

"Yes, child."

"If I die I—want you to bury me under—my own—name. Will you—will you ——"

"I will do anything you wish, Virginia. But you are not going to die. You must not. It would be too much. Too much!" He bowed his head upon the couch and sobbed aloud.

"Don't grieve so." Virginia tried to lift her hand to his head but it dropped back by her side. "I did not think you cared so," she said.

"I do, child, and I have not been good to you. Oh, if it were all to do over again!"

"Will—you tell me my—name now, uncle," said the girl slowly. "I could die—easier if I knew."

The Colonel looked at her pale face and saw that she was becoming very weak. He believed that she was truly dying.

"Listen," he said quickly. "Your true name is Evelyn Shebly Brandon. Dudley Brandon is your father."

"Dudley Brandon!" A light flashed over

Virginia's face, and she half raised herself. "Dudley Brandon my father? Oh, I am glad, glad!" Her voice died away. She gave a little sigh, and fell back unconscious. Colonel Pendleton started up despairingly.

"Virginia!" he called, but there was no answer. "Virginia!" he cried again. Then he rushed from the room.

"Where are you going, Colonel?" exclaimed a man who was just entering the house.

"I want a surgeon," cried the Colonel, wildly. "Don't stop me."

"I am the surgeon. Don't you know me? Lord Cornwallis sent me. He said a girl was wounded. Where is she?"

"Here!" The Colonel drew him within the room. "Is she dead?" he whispered, as the surgeon bent over the girl.

"Dead? Not a bit of it. Fainted from loss of blood, is all. See if there isn't a bed somewhere round where she can be placed after this wound is examined."

The cottage consisted of only four rooms, and the Colonel passed from one to another quickly. A comfortable-looking bedroom

opened off from the kitchen, and he began awkwardly to pull at the bedclothes trying to prepare a place for Virginia. While he was thus employed, a large, motherly-looking woman darted into the room, and seized his arm.

"What are you doing here, sir?" she demanded. "These are Captain Hanson's quarters."

"My good woman," said the Colonel, turning to her with relief, "I am glad to hear it. My niece was wounded as we withdrew from Lord Cornwallis' headquarters, and I brought her here. Won't you help me to get this bed ready for her?"

"The poor thing!" ejaculated the woman. "Of course I will."

Virginia, her wound dressed, looking very white and wan, was soon installed comfortably on the bed, under the care of good Mrs. Hanson.

The siege went merrily on. Lord Cornwallis was in despair, but he made one last desperate attempt to free himself from the meshes in which he was caught. Through the darkness of the night he tried to send his

men to Gloucester, hoping to make a dash for liberty should he succeed in landing his troops. A severe storm drove the boats far down the river, and he was forced to give up the attempt.

The next day he opened negotiations for the capitulation of the town. The British Hannibal had met his Zama at Yorktown.

CHAPTER XXX

THE END

THE nineteenth of October dawned bright and glorious. The terms of the surrender had been signed by the commanders, and there but remained the final scene to close the drama.

Virginia lay on her bed, weak and worn but with everything in favor of a speedy recovery. She had not been informed of the success of the Americans, and as yet knew nothing of the ending of the siege. Colonel Pendleton sat by the window wondering for the hundredth time if he were not dreaming that Cornwallis, the invincible, had really surrendered to Washington. He turned presently as he heard Virginia's faint voice.

"Uncle Ralph."

"Yes, child." He came to her side and bent over her affectionately. All the feeling that he had ever entertained against the

maiden had fled. Her devotion to him through his illness and now this last act of voluntarily receiving into her own body the bullet that would otherwise have lodged in his own frame aroused his tenderest emotions.

“Did you want anything?”

“Did I dream that you said that Colonel Brandon was my father?”

“No, child. He is truly your father. Shall I tell you about it?” answering the question that was in her eyes.

“If you will, Uncle Ralph.”

Colonel Pendleton took one of her hands between his own and then began :

“Dudley Brandon and I were great friends during our boyhood years, but in our young manhood we became enemies. Why does not matter. The story I told you of meeting your mother aboard ship was true save the fact that I had known her long ago. When I found myself on board the same vessel that was to bring her to her husband the opportunity of avenging a wrong he had done me presented itself. Your mother believed that Brandon was dead because she had not heard from him for some months. She was stricken with her

last illness and so confided you to my care. I sent the nurse up north ——”

“Was her name Jane?” interrupted Virginia with eagerness.

“Let me see,” mused the Colonel. “She was called Sophia, I believe. It might have been Sophia Jane; I don’t remember. At any rate I sent her north, and Dudley Brandon was informed that both wife and child had died on the voyage. I had named my own baby girl, Evelyn, after your mother, and it pleased me that my child should be called so, and not Brandon’s. For that reason I renamed you Virginia. I dare not ask your forgiveness, child. How could you forgive me after all my unkindness?”

“But I do,” spoke Virginia, her eyes shining. “I was so afraid that it was a dream. I am so happy! So happy, Uncle Ralph.”

“Are you, Virginia? Can you stand a little more joy, or will it be too much for you to know that Cornwallis has surrendered?”

“Cornwallis surrendered?” The girl tried to raise herself. The Colonel pushed her back gently on the pillows.

“Don’t excite yourself, my dear. You are not beyond danger yet.”

Virginia lay back obediently, but her eyes were full of questioning. The Colonel told her all that had happened since the night of the fourteenth ending with :

“So that you may see your friends soon, Virginia, but it is a sad day for the rest of us.”

The girl pressed his hand gently, but she could not conceal the delight that filled her being.

As the Colonel sat talking in low tones to her they were startled by the door being thrown open suddenly, and a number of American soldiers entered the apartment.

“Pardon us, sir,” said the officer in charge. “Its orders to go through this—— Why, Pendleton !”

“Is it you, Brandon ?” Colonel Pendleton rose a little wearily. “It seems to be a time of surrenderings. Permit me to give to you ——”

“My daughter !” exclaimed Brandon starting forward eagerly. “Is Virginia here ?”

“Father!” uttered Virginia.

“My daughter! My daughter!” cried Brandon, folding her to his heart.

“Father!” she whispered again and again.

Colonel Pendleton went out, leaving them alone.

“How did you know?” asked the girl tremulously.

“I think I must always have known, little one. But I found old Jane, who is not Jane at all, but Sophia my wife’s nurse, and she told me the story. Ah, but I have a reckoning to settle with Ralph Pendleton!”

“You must forgive him,” whispered Virginia. “For my sake, father.”

“You ask too much, little one. I cannot! I cannot! Did he not have his three? Why should he take mine also?”

“But for my sake, dear father,” pleaded the girl wistfully. “I love you both. Surely you will grant my first request.”

Colonel Pendleton opened the door at this moment.

“You must be careful of her, Brandon,” he said. “She must not be excited.”

Virginia beckoned him to her side. She

clasped his hand closely, and then reached out for Colonel Brandon's. For a moment Brandon hesitated.

"Surely you will not refuse," she murmured beseechingly.

"No, little one. I can refuse you nothing," said her father, tenderly.

Then the girl placed the two hands together.

"I love you both," she said. "So much, so much! Don't be enemies any more. For my sake."

The men looked each other straight in the eyes.

"Because she asks it, Dudley, can you forgive me?" said Colonel Pendleton, huskily.

"All these years you kept her from me," said Brandon. "Had it not been for Sophia I might never have known that she was my child."

"So you found Sophia? I wondered how you knew. But you would have known, Brandon. I told Virginia."

"Yes, father," said the maiden. "He told me. Do forgive him."

Colonel Pendleton held out his hand. Colonel Brandon hesitated no longer but grasped it warmly.

"For her sake then," he said hoarsely. "Well, let by-gones be by-gones. I have my daughter at last, and please God, she will be with me for many years."

"Always and always," murmured the girl. "I am happy now. Oh, I would rather have you for my father than any one else in the wide world."

"Would you, little one?" Colonel Brandon kissed her gently. "How was she wounded, Pendleton? I heard something of a girl's being shot, but I did not dream that it was my little one."

"What is all this that I hear about father's being here with Virgie?" asked Ralph Pendleton entering the room in the midst of Colonel Pendleton's recital. After him came the majestic form of Washington.

"Ralph!" cried Virginia joyfully.

"You are ill," exclaimed Ralph in consternation.

"Wounded," corrected Colonel Brandon. "But be not alarmed. She is on the road to

recovery. Your father was just telling how it happened."

Ralph looked at his father wistfully, not daring to approach him. General Washington saw his hesitation and turned to Colonel Pendleton.

"You have a son to be proud of in that boy, Colonel Pendleton," he said graciously. "Ralph has always been a good soldier, but he has particularly distinguished himself in this siege. I shall mention his bravery in my report to Congress."

Despite his haughtiness the Colonel could not repress a glow of pride. Unconsciously his heart had softened toward his son. The mere fact of overcoming his rancor sufficiently to ask Cornwallis to exercise leniency had done much to dispel his harshness. So true is it that exertion in behalf of another endears that other to the benefactor. The scene with Colonel Brandon and Virginia had left him in a tender mood, and the moment was a propitious one for Ralph. Washington saw his advantage and followed it up.

"Take the boy back to your heart, Pendleton. He is a noble lad, and you, from whom

he inherits his spirit, should be the last to turn from him for his independence. You should rather be proud that despite his affection for you he had the courage to stand by his convictions. He would not be a son of yours if he hadn't."

"Father," said Ralph appealingly, "won't you forgive me? The war is over now, you know."

Colonel Pendleton regarded him with emotion. There was a scarce perceptible pause, and then he opened his arms.

"Ralph," he said brokenly as the boy went to him gladly, "it is I who should ask forgiveness. I have been harsh and unkind. And now ——"

"And now we will all begin anew," said Colonel Brandon. "With the new Republic a new life opens before us."

"Hurrah for the United States," shouted Ralph boyishly.

"And I have my father, and Ralph has his," said Virginia sweetly.

"Your father!" exclaimed Ralph in astonishment. "Is Colonel Brandon your father? How does that happen? I don't like it a bit,"

he continued after hearing the explanation as he shook Colonel Brandon's hand warmly. "You always were on hand to rescue her, and now you are going to whisk her off like the ogre in the fairy tale."

"Don't take it too hard, my boy," laughed Colonel Brandon. "You can come to see Miss Brandon, you know."

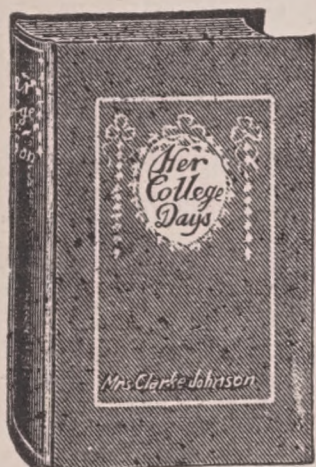
"Miss Brandon! How queer that sounds," remarked Ralph. "It doesn't suit you, Virgie, nearly so well as Pendleton."

"Perhaps we may find a way later to make her a Pendleton again," suggested Colonel Pendleton softly.

"'Twould be a happy ending," remarked Washington who had witnessed the scene with pleasure. "Let us hope that it is emblematic of the future when there shall be no longer strifes and dissensions between us. When Tory and Rebel shall be no more, and the country shall know but one kind of citizens—Americans."

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Suddenly bereft of father and fortune, a young girl finds herself face to face with the world. Except for a deed to some waste land, there is practically no estate whatever. To make matters worse, the executor of the estate endeavors to appropriate the deed to the land. The heroine engages in a long and heroic struggle for its possession. She succeeds in regaining it, and the land itself proves to be most valuable because of its location in a rich oil-producing district.

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An Odd Little Lass

By Jessie E. Wright

Illustrated by Ida Waugh

This is a story of the regeneration of a little street waif. She begins life in a lowly court of a large city. Her adventures are numerous, and often quite exciting. After a time she is transplanted to the country, where after many thrilling experiences she eventually grows into a useful and lovable young woman. The story is pleasantly told, and abounds in interesting incident.

"The story is an intensely interesting one, and abounds in pleasing and unique situations."—*Religious Telescope*, Dayton Ohio.

An Every-Day Heroine

By Mary A. Denison

Illustrated by Ida Waugh

The heroine is not an impossible character but only a pure, winsome, earnest girl, who at fourteen years of age is suddenly bereft of fortune and father and becomes the chief support of a semi-invalid mother. While there are many touching scenes, the story as a whole is bright and cheerful and moves forward with a naturalness and ease that carries its readers along and makes them reluctant to put down the book until the end is reached.





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